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THE GOLDEN TREASURY OF MODERN LYRICS

BOOK I



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
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THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

THE GOLDEN TREASURY

OF

MODERN LYRICS

BOOK I

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

BY

LAURENCE BINYON

WITH NOTES

BY

J. H. FOWLER, M.A.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1926

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MR. BINYON'S PREFACE

THE original Golden Treasury, first published in 1861, was designed to contain all the best songs and lyrics in our language up to the year 1850. The limitation, however, which excluded the work of writers still living in 1861, prevented any representation of the chief Victorian poets; and in effect the volume hardly carried the reader beyond the period which closed with the death of Byron in 1824, when Wordsworth and Coleridge, the great survivors of that period, had done their best work. The present volume is designed to continue the original Golden Treasury through the Victorian age to the present day, and in effect covers nearly a century. But it cannot make quite so comprehensive a claim as its predecessor. Even in the case of work which has been sifted by time a wide diversity of opinion, as to what is best, persists: the diversity is accentuated the nearer we approach to contemporaries. To present "all the best poems" written in English during the

period is an ambition for the infallible. But apart from other difficulties the amplitude of the material and the prescribed limitation of space made the comprehensiveness of such an aim impossible. No attempt has been made to represent the whole range of English-speaking writers. To have included selections from the poets of the Overseas Dominions and from Indian poets using our language—to say nothing of the poetry of America—would have increased the material beyond manageable scope. Even with these limitations I have been obliged to omit a number of beautiful poems from mere considerations of space. A few are absent for other causes beyond my control.

The difficulties and dangers of choosing from recent and contemporary verse are obvious. Some pieces which should have found a place may have been overlooked ; the right things may have been read in the wrong mood ; mistakes of judgement are probably inevitable. But he who is rash enough to undertake such a task must bear the responsibility as best he may. The inordinate length of some of the lyrics produced during the period has been an additional difficulty. In a few cases I have ventured, like Mr. Palgrave, to compress or extract : all such instances are recorded in the Notes.

The death of Tennyson closed an epoch in our

poetry. It seemed best, therefore, in presenting a book of lyrics often so different in mood and atmosphere, to divide the selection into two books, corresponding roughly with the periods before and after that date. But no precise dividing line has been chosen: overlapping is unavoidable; harmony and convenience of arrangement have determined the choice in doubtful cases.

Cordial acknowledgements are here tendered to the following authors and owners of copyrights who have given permission for poems to appear in these pages:

Messrs. George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., for two poems from *Ionica*, by William Cory; Lady Betty Balfour and Lady Lytton, for the poem by Robert, Earl of Lytton (Owen Meredith), from *The Wanderer* (1859); Messrs. G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., and Mrs. Patmore, for the poems by Coventry Patmore; Mr. Edmund Blunden and Mr. R. Cobden-Sanderson, for the poems by John Clare; Mr. Jonathan Cape, for the sonnet by Samuel Butler; Messrs. Constable and Co., Ltd., for the poems by George Meredith; Messrs. P. J. and A. E. Dobell, for the passage from *The City of Dreadful Night*, by James Thomson; Mr. A. T. A. Dobson and the Oxford University Press, for the poems by Austin Dobson; Messrs. Ellis, for poems by D. G. Rossetti; Messrs. William

Heinemann, Ltd., for the poems by Sir Edmund Gosse and A. C. Swinburne; Mr. John Lane, the Bodley Head, Ltd., for the poem by Arthur O'Shaughnessy; Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co., for the poems by William Morris; Mr. Herbert Paul, for the poems by D. Mackworth Dolben; Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., for the poem by William Barnes.

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BOOK I

THE PHOENIX

O BLEST unfabled Incense Tree,
That burns in glorious Araby,
With red scent chalicing the air,
Till earth-life grow Elysian there !

Half buried to her flaming breast
In this bright tree, she makes her nest,
Hundred-sunned Phoenix ! when she must
Crumble at length to hoary dust !

Her gorgeous death-bed ! her rich pyre
Burnt up with aromatic fire !
Her urn, sight-high from spoiler men !
Her birthplace when self-born again !

The mountainless green wilds among,
Here ends she her unechoing song !
With amber tears and odorous sighs
Mourned by the desert where she dies !

George Darley.

II

A GARDEN BY THE SEA

I KNOW a little garden-close,
Set thick with lily and red rose,
Where I would wander if I might
From dewy morn to dewy night,
And have one with me wandering.

And though within it no birds sing,
And though no pillared house is there,
And though the apple-boughs are bare
Of fruit and blossom, would to God
Her feet upon the green grass trod,
And I beheld them as before.

There comes a murmur from the shore,
And in the close two fair streams are,
Drawn from the purple hills afar,
Drawn down unto the restless sea:
Dark hills whose heath-bloom feeds no bee,
Dark shore no ship has ever seen,
Tormented by the billows green
Whose murmur comes unceasingly
Unto the place for which I cry.
For which I cry both day and night,
For which I let slip all delight,
Whereby I grow both deaf and blind,
Careless to win, unskilled to find,
And quick to lose what all men seek.

Yet tottering as I am and weak,
Still have I left a little breath
To seek within the jaws of death
An entrance to that happy place,
To seek the unforgotten face,
Once seen, once kissed, once reft from me
Anigh the murmuring of the sea.

William Morris.

III

TO FANCY

I AM here for thee,
Art thou there for me ?
Or, traitress to my watchful heart,
Dost thou from rock and wave depart,
And from the desolate sea ?

I am here for thee,
Art thou there for me ?
Or, Fancy, with thy wondrous smile
Wilt thou no more my eyes beguile
Betwixt the clouds and sea ?

I am here for thee,
Art thou there for me ?
Spirit of brightness, shy and sweet !
My eyes thy glimmering robe would meet
Above the glimmering sea.

My little skill,
My passionate will
Are here : where art thou ? Spirit, bow
From darkening cloud thy heavenly brow,
Ere sinks the ebbing sea.

Richard Watson Dixon

IV

SPEAK, GOD OF VISIONS

O, THY bright eyes must answer now,
When Reason, with a scornful brow,
Is mocking at my overthrow !
Oh, thy sweet tongue must plead for me
And tell why I have chosen thee !

Stern Reason is to judgment come,
Arrayed in all her forms of gloom :
Wilt thou, my advocate, be dumb ?
No, radiant angel, speak and say,
Why I did cast the world away.—

Why I have persevered to shun
The common paths that others run,
And on a strange road journeyed on,
Heedless alike of wealth and power,
Of Glory's wreath and Pleasure's flower.

These once, indeed, seemed Beings Divine ;
And they, perchance, heard vows of mine,
And saw my offerings on their shrine ;
But careless gifts are seldom prized,
And mine were worthily despised.

So, with a ready heart, I swore
To seek their altar-stone no more ;
And gave my spirit to adore
Thee, ever-present, phantom thing—
My slave, my comrade, and my king.

A slave, because I rule thee still,
Incline thee to my changeful will,
And make thy influence, good or ill :
A comrade, for by day and night
Thou art my intimate delight,—

My darling pain that wounds and sears,
And wrings a blessing out from tears
By deadening me to earthly cares ;
And yet, a king, though Prudence well
Have taught thy subject to rebel.

And am I wrong to worship where
Faith cannot doubt, nor Hope despair,
Since my own soul can grant my prayer ?
Speak, God of visions, plead for me,
And tell why I have chosen thee !

Emily Brontë.

V

THE VOICE

As the kindling glances,
 Queen-like and clear,
Which the bright moon lances
 From her tranquil sphere

At the sleepless waters
Of a lonely mere,
On the wild whirling waves, mournfully, mournfully,
Shiver and die.

As the tears of sorrow
Mothers have shed—
Prayers that to-morrow
Shall in vain be sped
When the flower they flow for
Lies frozen and dead—
Fall on the throbbing brow, fall on the burning breast,
Bringing no rest.

Like bright waves that fall
With a lifelike motion
On the lifeless margin of the sparkling Ocean ;
A wild rose climbing up a mouldering wall—
A gush of sunbeams through a ruin'd hall—
Strains of glad music at a funeral—
So sad, and with so wild a start
To this deep-sober'd heart,
So anxiously and painfully,
So drearily and doubtfully,
And oh, with such intolerable change
Of thought, such contrast strange,
O unforgotten voice, thy accents come,
Like wanderers from the world's extremity
Unto their ancient home !

In vain, all, all in vain,
They beat upon mine ear again,
Those melancholy tones so sweet and still.
Those lute-like tones which in the bygone year
Did steal into mine ear—
Blew such a thrilling summons to my will,
Yet could not shake it ;
Made my tost heart its very life-blood spill,
Yet could not break it.

Matthew Arnold.

VI

SIBYLLA PALMIFERA

UNDER the arch of Life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned ; and though her gaze struck awe,
I drew it in as simply as my breath.
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still,—long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days !

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

VII

SONG IN THE SONGLESS

THEY have no song, the sedges dry,
 And still they sing.
It is within my breast they sing,
 As I pass by.
Within my breast they touch a string,
 They wake a sigh.
There is but sound of sedges dry;
 In me they sing.

George Meredith.

VIII

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
 Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
 With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
 From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
 Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sate the great god Pan,
 While turbidly flowed the river ;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
 To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan
 (How tall it stood in the river !)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
 In holes, as he sate by the river.

" This is the way," laughed the great god Pan
 (Laughed while he sate by the river),
" The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed."
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed
 He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan !
 Piercing sweet by the river !
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan !
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
 Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
 To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man :
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
 As a reed with the reeds in the river.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

IX

THE LOTOS-EATERS: CHORIC SONG

1

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

2

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,

Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
" There is no joy but calm ! "
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things ?

3

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

4

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life ; ah, why
Should life all labour be ?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.

Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

5

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

6

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.

Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle ?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile :
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

7

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

8

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :

All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world :
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong ;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave
the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring
toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and
oil ;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis
whisper'd—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys
dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the
shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
wave and oar ;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
more.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

X

DAVID SINGS TO SAUL

Oh, the wild joys of living ! the leaping from rock
up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree,
the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of
the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in
his lair.

And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with
gold dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the
full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where
bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly
and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living ! how fit
to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever
in joy !
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father,
whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for
glorious reward ?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held
up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear her
faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, " Let one
more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand thro' a lifetime, and
all was for best " ?
Then they sung thro' their tears in strong triumph,
not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the
working whence grew
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the
spirit strained true :
And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of
wonder and hope,

Present promise and wealth of the future beyond
the eye's scope,—
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is
thine;
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one
head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and
rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labour and lets
the gold go),
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame
crowning them,—all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—
King Saul!

Robert Browning.

XI

OFTEN rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with me,
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be;

To-day, I will not seek the shadowy region;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
And visions rising, legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long-past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading :
It vexes me to choose another guide :
Where the gray flocks in ferny glens are feeding ;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
More glory and more grief than I can tell :
The earth that wakes one human heart to feeling
Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

Emily Brontë.

XII

THE SHEPHERD'S TREE

HUGE elm, with rifted trunk all notched and scarred,
Like to a warrior's destiny ! I love
To stretch me often on thy shadowed sward,
And hear the laugh of summer leaves above ;
Or on thy buttressed roots to sit, and lean
In careless attitude, and there reflect
On times, and deeds, and darings that have been—
Old castaways, now swallowed in neglect,

While thou art towering in thy strength of heart,
Stirring the soul to vain imaginings
In which life's sordid being hath no part.
The wind of that eternal ditty sings,
Humming of future things, that burn the mind
To leave some fragment of itself behind.

John Clare.

XIII

THE VENETIAN PASTORAL:

A Picture by GIORGIONE

WATER, for anguish of the solstice:—nay,
But dip the vessel slowly,—nay, but lean
And hark how at its verge the wave sighs in
Reluctant. Hush! beyond all depth away
The heat lies silent at the brink of day:
Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,
Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray
Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes creep
And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass
Is cool against her naked side? Let be:—
Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
Nor name this ever. Be it as it was,—
Life touching lips with Immortality.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

XIV

A SONG OF FLIGHT

WHILE we slumber and sleep
The sun leaps up from the deep
—Daylight born at the leap!—
Rapid, dominant, free,
Athirst to bathe in the uttermost sea.

While we linger at play
—If the year would stand at May !—
Winds are up and away
Over land, over sea,
To their goal wherever their goal may be.

It is time to arise,
To race for the promised prize,
—The Sun flies, the Wind flies—
We are strong, we are free,
And home lies beyond the stars and the sea.

Christina Rossetti.

XV

THE splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story :
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going !
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

XVI

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

COME, dear children, let us away ;
Down and away below !
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow ;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away !
This way, this way !

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet !
In a voice that she will know :
" Margaret ! Margaret ! "
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear ;
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again !
Call her once and come away ;
This way, this way !
" Mother dear, we cannot stay !
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down ;
Call no more !
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore ;
Then come down !
She will not come though you call all day ;
Come away, come away !

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell ?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep ;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye ?
When did music come this way ?
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away ?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.

She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea ;
She said : " I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me !
And I lose my poor soul, Merman ! here with thee."
I said : " Go up, dear heart, through the waves ;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves ! "
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?
" The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan ;
Long prayers," I said, " in the world they say ;
Come ! " I said ; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town ;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.

She sate by the pillar ; we saw her clear :
" Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here !
Dear heart," I said, " we are long alone ;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book !
Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more !
Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down !
Down to the depths of the sea !
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings : " O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy !
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun ! "
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare ;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh ;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children ;
Come children, come down !
The hoarse wind blows coldly ;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl,
Singing : " Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she !
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low ;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom ;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town ;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down,

Singing: "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

Matthew Arnold.

XVII

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses ; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot :
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot :
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
" Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide ;
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
" The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot ;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,

A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this ? and what is here ?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer ;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot :
But Lancelot mused a little space ;
He said, " She has a lovely face ;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

XVIII

THE LABORATORY : *ANCIEN RÉGIME*

Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,
May gaze thro' these faint smokes curling whitely,
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-smithy—
Which is the poison to poison her, prithee ?

He is with her, and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do : they believe my
tears flow

While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them !—I am here.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder,—I am not in haste !
Better sit thus, and observe thy strange things,
Than go where men wait me and dance at the King's.

That in the mortar—you call it a gum ?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come !
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,
Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison too ?

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures !
To carry pure death in an ear-ring, a casket,
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree basket !

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give,
And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live !
But to light a pastille, and Elise, with her head
And her breast and her arms and her hands, should drop dead !

Quick—is it finished ? The colour's too grim !
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim ?
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,
And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer !

What a drop ! She's not little, no minion like me !
That's why she ensnared him : this never will free
The soul from those masculine eyes,—say, " No ! "
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

For only last night, as they whispered, I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall
Shrivelled ; she fell not ; yet this does it all !

Not that I bid you spare her the pain ;
Let death be felt and the proof remain ;
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—
He is sure to remember her dying face !

Is it done ? Take my mask off ! Nay, be not morose ;
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close :
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee !
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me ?

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will !
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings
Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the King's !

Robert Browning.

XIX

AMATURUS

SOMEWHERE beneath the sun,
 These quivering heart-strings prove it,
Somewhere there must be one
 Made for this soul, to move it ;
Some one that hides her sweetness
 From neighbours whom she slights,
Nor can attain completeness,
 Nor give her heart its rights ;
Some one whom I could court
 With no great change of manner,
Still holding reason's fort,
 Though waving fancy's banner ;
A lady, not so queenly
 As to disdain my hand,
Yet born to smile serenely
 Like those that rule the land ;
Noble, but not too proud ;
 With soft hair simply folded,
And bright face crescent-browed,
 And throat by Muses moulded ;
And eyelids lightly falling
 On little glistening seas,
Deep-calm, when gales are brawling,
 Though stirred by every breeze :
Swift voice, like flight of dove
 Through minster arches floating,
With sudden turns, when love
 Gets overnear to doting ;

Keen lips, that shape soft sayings
 Like crystals of the snow,
With pretty half-betrayings
 Of things one may not know ;
Fair hand, whose touches thrill,
 Like golden rod of wonder,
Which Hermes wields at will
 Spirit and flesh to sunder ;
Light foot, to press the stirrup
 In fearlessness and glee,
Or dance, till finches chirrup,
 And stars sink to the sea.

Forth, Love, and find this maid,
 Wherever she be hidden :
Speak, Love, be not afraid,
 But plead as thou art bidden ;
And say, that he who taught thee
 His yearning want and pain,
Too dearly, dearly bought thee
 To part with thee in vain.

William Cory.

XX

SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY

WELL dost thou, Love, thy solemn Feast to hold
In vestal February ;
Not rather choosing out some rosy day
From the rich coronet of the coming May,
When all things meet to marry !
 O quick, prævernal Power

That signall'st punctual through the sleepy mould
The Snowdrop's time to flower,
Fair as the rash oath of virginity
Which is first-love's first cry ;
O, Baby spring,
That flutter'st sudden 'neath the breast of Earth
A month before the birth ;
Whence is the peaceful poignancy,
The joy contrite,
Sadder than sorrow, sweeter than delight,
That burthens now the breath of everything,
Though each one sighs as if to each alone
The cherish'd pang were known ?
At dusk of dawn, on his dark spray apart,
With it the Blackbird breaks the young Day's heart ;
In evening's hush
About it talks the heavenly-minded Thrush ;
The hill with like remorse
Smiles to the Sun's smile in his westering course ;
The fisher's drooping skiff
In yonder sheltering bay ;
The choughs that call about the shining cliff ;
The children, noisy in the setting ray ;
Own the sweet season, each thing as it may ;
Thoughts of strange kindness and forgotten peace
In me increase ;
And tears arise
Within my happy, happy Mistress' eyes,
And, lo, her lips, averted from my kiss,
Ask from Love's bounty, ah, much more than bliss !
Is't the sequester'd and exceeding sweet
Of dear Desire electing his defeat ?

Is't the waked Earth now to yon purpling cope
Uttering first-love's first cry,
Vainly renouncing, with a seraph's sigh,
Love's natural hope ?
Fair-meaning Earth, foredoom'd to perjury !
Behold, all amorous May,
With roses heap'd upon her laughing brows,
Avoids thee of thy vows !
Were it for thee, with her warm bosom near,
To abide the sharpness of the Seraph's sphere ?
Forget thy foolish words ;
Go to her summons gay,
Thy heart with dead, wing'd Innocencies fill'd,
Ev'n as a nest with birds
After the old ones by the hawk are kill'd.
 Well dost thou, Love, to celebrate
The noon of thy soft ecstasy,
Or e'er it be too late,
Or e'er the Snowdrop die !

Coventry Patmore.

XXI

DREAM-LOVE

YOUNG Love lies sleeping
 In May-time of the year,
Among the lilies,
 Lapped in the tender light :
White lambs come grazing,
 White doves come building there :
And round about him
 The May-bushes are white.

Soft moss the pillow
 For oh, a softer cheek ;
Broad leaves cast shadow
 Upon the heavy eyes :
There wind and waters
 Grow lulled and scarcely speak ;
There twilight lingers
 The longest in the skies.

Young Love lies dreaming ;
 But who shall tell the dream ?
A perfect sunlight
 On rustling forest tips ;
Or perfect moonlight
 Upon a rippling stream ;
Or perfect silence,
 Or song of cherished lips.

Burn odours round him
 To fill the drowsy air ;
Weave silent dances
 Around him to and fro ;
For oh, in waking
 The sights are not so fair,
And song and silence
 Are not like these below.

Young Love lies dreaming
 Till summer days are gone,—
Dreaming and drowsing
 Away to perfect sleep :

He sees the beauty
 Sun hath not looked upon,
And tastes the fountain
 Unutterably deep.

Him perfect music
 Doth hush unto his rest,
And through the pauses
 The perfect silence calms :
Oh, poor the voices
 Of earth from east to west,
And poor earth's stillness
 Between her stately palms.

Young Love lies drowsing
 Away to poppied death ;
Cool shadows deepen
 Across the sleeping face :
So fails the summer
 With warm, delicious breath ;
And what hath autumn
 To give us in its place ?

Draw close the curtains
 Of branched evergreen ;
Change cannot touch them
 With fading fingers sere :
Here first the violets
 Perhaps will bud unseen,
And a dove, may be,
 Return to nestle here.

Christina Rossetti.

XXII

SUMMUM BONUM

ALL the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee :
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem :
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea :
Breath and bloom, shade and shine, wonder, wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

Robert Browning.

XXIII

THE HUNTSMEN'S CHORUS

WHEN the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain ;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
 Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
 With a clamour of waters, and with might ;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendour and speed of thy feet ;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
 Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
 Fold our hands round her knees, and cling ?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
 Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring !
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player ;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
 And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
 And all the season of snows and sins ;
The days dividing lover and lover,
 The light that loses, the night that wins ;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
 Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
 Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
 From leaf to flower and flower to fruit ;

And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid ;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes ;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs ;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

XXIV

ECHOES OF LOVE'S HOUSE

LOVE gives every gift, whereby we long to live ;
" Love takes every gift, and nothing back doth give."

Love unlocks the lips that else were ever dumb :
" Love locks up the lips whence all things good might come."

Love makes clear the eyes that else would never see :
" Love makes blind the eyes to all but me and thee."

Love turns life to joy till nought is left to gain :
" Love turns life to woe till hope is nought and vain."

Love, who changest all, change me nevermore !
" Love, who changest all, change my sorrow sore ! "

Love burns up the world to changeless heaven and blest,
" Love burns up the world to a void of all unrest."

And there we twain are left, and no more work we need :
" And I am left alone, and who my work shall heed ? "

Ah ! I praise thee, Love, for utter joyance won !
" And is my praise nought worth for all my life undone ? "

William Morris.

XXV

HER HEAVEN

If to grow old in Heaven is to grow young,
(As the Seer saw and said), then blest were he
With youth for evermore, whose heaven should be
True Woman, she whom these weak notes have sung.
Here and hereafter,—choir-strains of her tongue—
Sky-spaces of her eyes,—sweet signs that flee
About her soul's immediate sanctuary,—
Were Paradise all uttermost worlds among.

The sunrise blooms and withers on the hill
Like any hillflower ; and the noblest troth
Dies here to dust. Yet shall Heaven's promise clothe
Even yet those lovers who have cherished still
This test for love :—in every kiss sealed fast
To feel the first kiss and forebode the last.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

XXVI

THE NEW LOVE AND THE OLD

I made another garden, yea,
For my new Love :
I left the dead rose where it lay
And set the new above.

Why did my Summer not begin ?
Why did my heart not haste ?
My old Love came and walk'd therein
And laid the garden waste.

She enter'd with her weary smile,
Just as of old ;
She look'd around a little while
And shiver'd with the cold :
Her passing touch was death to all,
Her passing look a blight ;
She made the white rose-petals fall,
And turn'd the red rose white.

Her pale robe clinging to the grass
Seem'd like a snake
That bit the grass and ground, alas !
And a sad trail did make.
She went up slowly to the gate,
And then, just as of yore,
She turn'd back at the last to wait
And say farewell once more.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy.

XXVII

MARIAN

SHE can be as wise as we,
And wiser when she wishes ;
She can knit with cunning wit,
And dress the homely dishes.

She can flourish staff or pen
And deal a wound that lingers ;
She can talk the talk of men,
And touch with thrilling fingers.

Match her ye across the sea,
Natures fond and fiery ;
Ye who zest the turtle's nest
With the eagle's eyrie.
Soft and loving is her soul,
Swift and lofty soaring ;
Mixing with its dove-like dole
Passionate adoring.

Such a she who'll match with me ?
In flying or pursuing,
Subtle wiles are in her smiles
To set the world a-wooing.
She is steadfast as a star,
And yet the maddest maiden :
She can wage a gallant war,
And give the peace of Eden.

George Meredith.

XXVIII

A MATCH

If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,

Blown fields or flowerful closes,
 Green pleasure or grey grief ;
If love were what the rose is,
 And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
 And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
 That get sweet rain at noon ;
If I were what the words are,
 And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
 And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
 And hours of fruitful breath ;
If you were life, my darling,
 And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
 And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
 And laughs of maid and boy ;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
 And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
 And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
 And night were bright like day ;
If you were April's lady,
 And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
 And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
 And find his mouth a rein ;
If you were queen of pleasure,
 And I were king of pain.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

XXIX

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

I WONDER do you feel to-day
 As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
 In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May ?

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
 Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
 Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

Help me to hold it ! First it left
 The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
 Some old tomb's ruin : yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

Where one small orange cup amassed
 Five beetles,—blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal : and last,
 Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast !

The champaign with its endless fleece
 Of feathery grasses everywhere !
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
 An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,
 Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
 Such letting nature have her way
While heaven looks from its towers !

How say you ? Let us, O my dove,
 Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above !
 How is it under our control
To love or not to love ?

I would that you were all to me,
 You that are just so much, no more.

Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free !
Where does the fault lie ? What the core
O' the wound, since wound must be ?

I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs,—your part my part
In life, for good and ill.

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes.

Already how am I so far
Out of that minute ? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star ?

Just when I seemed about to learn !
Where is the thread now ? Off again !
The old trick ! Only I discern—
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

Robert Browning.

XXX

How do I love thee ? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right ;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life !—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

XXXI

WHEN our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point,—what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented ? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us, and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song

Into our deep dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Beloved, where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

XXXII

YET, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed
And worthy of acceptation. Fire is bright,
Let temple burn, or flax. An equal light
Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank or weed.
And love is fire; and when I say at need
I love thee . . . mark! . . . *I love thee*! . . . in thy sight
I stand transfigured, glorified aright,
With conscience of the new rays that proceed
Out of my face toward thine. There's nothing low
In love, when love the lowest: meanest creatures
Who love God, God accepts while loving so.
And what I feel, across the inferior features
Of what I am, doth flash itself, and show
How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

XXXIII

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

THE rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake :
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria ; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm ;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me—she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me for ever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain :
So, she was come through wind and rain.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes
Happy and proud ; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me ; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good : I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she ;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds the bee,
I warily oped her lids : again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
About her neck ; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss :
I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still :
The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead !
Porphyria's love : she guessed not how
Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word !

Robert Browning.

XXXIV

A FAREWELL

THERE lived a singer in France of old
By the tideless dolorous midland sea.
In a land of sand and ruin and gold
There shone one woman, and none but she.
And finding life for her love's sake fail,
Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,
Touched land, and saw her as life grew cold,
And praised God, seeing ; and so died he.

Died, praising God for his gift and grace :
For she bowed down to him weeping, and said
" Live ; " and her tears were shed on his face
Or ever the life in his face was shed.
The sharp tears fell through her hair, and stung
Once, and her close lips touched him and clung
Once, and grew one with his lips for a space ;
And so drew back, and the man was dead.

O brother, the gods were good to you.
Sleep, and be glad while the world endures.
Be well content as the years wear through ;
Give thanks for life, and the loves and lures ;
Give thanks for life, O brother, and death,
For the sweet last sound of her feet, her breath,
For gifts she gave you, gracious and few,
Tears and kisses, that lady of yours.

Rest, and be glad of the gods ; but I,
How shall I praise them, or how take rest ?
There is not room under all the sky
For me that know not of worst or best,

Dream or desire of the days before,
Sweet things or bitterness, any more.
Love will not come to me now though I die,
As love came close to you, breast to breast.

I shall never be friends again with roses ;
I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note grown strong
Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,
As a wave of the sea turned back by song.
There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,
Face to face with its own desire :
A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes ;
I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

The pulse of war and passion of wonder,
The heavens that murmur, the sounds that shine,
The stars that sing and the loves that thunder,
The music burning at heart like wine,
An armed archangel whose hands raise up
All senses mixed in the spirit's cup
Till flesh and spirit are molten in sunder—
These things are over, and no more mine.

These were a part of the playing I heard
Once, ere my love and my heart were at strife ;
Love that sings and hath wings as a bird,
Balm of the wound and heft of the knife.
Fairer than earth is the sea, and sleep
Than overwatching of eyes that weep,
Now time has done with his one sweet word,
The wine and leaven of lovely life.

I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,
 Fill the days of my daily breath
With fugitive things not good to treasure,
 Do as the world doth, say as it saith ;
But if we had loved each other—O sweet,
Had you felt, lying under the palms of your feet,
The heart of my heart, beating harder with pleasure
 To feel you tread it to dust and death—

Ah, had I not taken my life up and given
 All that life gives and the years let go,
The wine and honey, the balm and leaven,
 The dreams reared high and the hopes brought low ?
Come life, come death, not a word be said ;
Should I lose you living, and vex you dead ?
I never shall tell you on earth ; and in heaven,
 If I cry to you then, will you hear or know ?

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

XXXV

MARIANA

"Mariana in the moated grange."
Measure for Measure.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :
The rusted nails fell from the knots
 That held the pear to the gable-wall.

The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
 She only said, " My life is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead ! "

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
 Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
 When thickest dark did trance the sky,
 She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
 She only said, " The night is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead ! "

Upon the middle of the night,
 Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :
The cock sung out an hour ere light :
 From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her : without hope of change,
 In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
 Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
 She only said, " The day is dreary,
 He cometh not," she said ;
 She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead ! "

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.

She only said, " My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead ! "

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, " I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said ;
She wept, " I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead ! "

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

XXXVI

REMEMBRANCE

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far, removed, cold in the dreary grave !
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave ?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,

Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more ?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring :
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering !

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along ;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong !

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me ;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy ;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine ;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain ;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again ?

Emily Brontë.

XXXVII

ROSE AYLMER

Ah, what avails the sceptred race !
 Ah, what the form divine !
What every virtue, every grace !
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
 May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and sighs
 I consecrate to thee.

Walter Savage Landor.

XXXVIII

MODERN LOVE

In our old shipwrecked days there was an hour,
When in the firelight steadily aglow,
Joined slackly, we beheld the red chasm grow
Among the clicking coals. Our library-bower
That eve was left to us : and hushed we sat
As lovers to whom Time is whispering.
From sudden-opened doors we heard them sing :
The nodding elders mixed good wine with chat.

Well knew we that Life's greatest treasure lay
With us, and of it was our talk. " Ah, yes !
Love dies ! " I said : I never thought it less.
She yearned to me that sentence to unsay.
Then when the fire domed blackening, I found
Her cheek was salt against my kiss, and swift
Up the sharp scale of sobs her breast did lift—
Now am I haunted by that taste ! that sound !

George Meredith.

XXXIX

MARK where the pressing wind shoots javelin-like
Its skeleton shadow on the broad-backed wave !
Here is a fitting spot to dig Love's grave ;
Here where the ponderous breakers plunge and
strike,
And dart their hissing tongues high up the sand :
In hearing of the ocean, and in sight
Of those ribbed wind-streaks running into white.

If I the death of Love had deeply planned,
I never could have made it half so sure
As by the unblest kisses which upbraid
The full-waked sense ; or failing that, degrade !
'Tis morning : but no morning can restore
What we have forfeited. I see no sin :
The wrong is mixed. In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be ! Passions spin the plot :
We are betrayed by what is false within.

George Meredith.

XL

WE saw the swallows gathering in the sky,
And in the osier-isle we heard them noise.
We had not to look back on summer joys,
Or forward to a summer of bright dye :
But in the largeness of the evening earth
Our spirits grew as we went side by side.
The hour became her husband and my bride.
Love, that had robbed us so, thus blessed our dearth !
The pilgrims of the year waxed very loud
In multitudinous chatterings, as the flood
Full brown came from the West, and like pale blood
Expanded to the upper crimson cloud.
Love, that had robbed us of immortal things,
This little moment mercifully gave,
And still I see across the twilight wave
The swan sail with her young beneath her wings.

George Meredith.

XLI

THUS piteously Love closed what he begat :
The union of this ever-diverse pair !
These two were rapid falcons in a snare,
Condemned to do the flitting of the bat.
Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,
They wandered once ; clear as the dew on flowers :
But they fed not on the advancing hours :
Their hearts held cravings for the buried day.

Then each applied to each that fatal knife,
Deep questioning, which probes to endless dole.
Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life !—
In tragic hints here see what evermore
Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore !

George Meredith.

XLII

TWICE

I TOOK my heart in my hand
(O my love, O my love),
I said : Let me fall or stand,
Let me live or die,
But this once hear me speak—
(O my love, O my love)—
Yet a woman's words are weak ;
You should speak, not I.

You took my heart in your hand
With a friendly smile,
With a critical eye you scanned,
Then set it down,
And said : It is still unripe,
Better wait awhile ;
Wait while the skylarks pipe,
Till the corn grows brown.

As you set it down it broke—
 Broke, but I did not wince ;
I smiled at the speech you spoke,
 At your judgment that I heard :
But I have not often smiled
 Since then, nor questioned since,
Nor cared for corn-flowers wild,
 Nor sung with the singing bird.

I take my heart in my hand,
 O my God, O my God,
My broken heart in my hand :
 Thou hast seen, judge Thou.
My hope was written on sand,
 O my God, O my God :
Now let Thy judgment stand—
 Yea, judge me now.

This contemned of a man,
 This marred one heedless day,
This heart take Thou to scan
 Both within and without :
Refine with fire its gold,
 Purge Thou its dross away—
Yea, hold it in Thy hold,
 Whence none can pluck it out.

I take my heart in my hand—
 I shall not die, but live—
Before Thy face I stand ;
 I, for Thou callest such :

All that I have I bring,
All that I am I give,
Smile Thou and I shall sing,
But shall not question much.

Christina Rossetti.

XLIII

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I SAID—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be—
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness !
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers ;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance : right !
The blood replenished me again ;
My last thought was at least not vain :
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-night ?

Hush ! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once—
 And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here !—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear !
 Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
 What need to strive with a life awry ?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me ? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell !
Where had I been now if the worst befell ?
 And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds ?
Why, all men strive and who succeeds ?
We rode ; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
 As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought,—All labour, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.

Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past.
I hoped she would love me ; here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired ?
What heart alike conceived and dared ?
What act proved all its thought had been ?
What will but felt the fleshly screen ?
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can reach.
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each !
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing ! what atones ?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet ? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only ; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.
'Tis something, nay 'tis much : but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men ?
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rhyme ?
Sing, riding's a joy ! For me, I ride.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that's your Venus, whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn !

You acquiesce, and shall I repine ?
What, man of music, you grown grey
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
" Greatly his opera strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end ! "
I gave my youth ; but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what's fit for us ? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being—had I signed the bond—
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such ? Try and test !
I sink back shuddering from the quest.
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best ?
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

And yet—she has not spoke so long !
What if heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide ?
What if we still ride on, we two
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride ?

Robert Browning.

XLIV

CHILD'S SONG

WHAT is gold worth, say,
Worth for work or play,
Worth to keep or pay,
Hide or throw away,
 Hope about or fear ?
What is love worth, pray ?
 Worth a tear ?

Golden on the mould
Lie the dead leaves roll'd
Of the wet woods old,
Yellow leaves and cold,
 Woods without a dove ;
Gold is worth but gold ;
 Love's worth love.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

XLV

MEETING AT NIGHT

THE grey sea and the long black land ;
And the yellow half-moon large and low ;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach ;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears ;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each !

Robert Browning.

XLVI

PARTING AT MORNING

ROUND the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim :
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

Robert Browning.

XLVII

A GREETING

BUT once or twice we met, touched hands.
To-day between us both expands
A waste of tumbling waters wide,—
A waste by me as yet untried,
Vague with the doubt of unknown lands.

Time like a despot speeds his sands :
A year he blots, a day he brands ;
We walked, we talked by Thamis' side
But once or twice.

What makes a friend ? What filmy strands
Are these that turn to iron bands ?
What knot is this so firmly tied
That naught but fate can now divide ?—
Ah, these are things one understands
But once or twice.

Austin Dobson.

XLVIII

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

WHERE the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to (else they run
Into one)

Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was !
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago ;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame ;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,

And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-coloured eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished grey
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.
Oh heart ! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns !
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin !
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest !
Love is best.

Robert Browning.

XLIX

TO MARGUERITE

YES ! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing ;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour—

Oh ! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent ;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent !
Now round us spreads the watery plain—
Oh might our marges meet again !

Who order'd, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd ?
Who renders vain their deep desire ?
A God, a God their severance ruled !
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.

Matthew Arnold.

L

SAPPHO

ALL the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,
Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather,
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron
Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision
Came without sleep over the seas and touched me,
Softly touched mine eyelids and lips ; and I too,
Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
Saw the hair unbound and the feet unsandalled
Shine as fire of sunset on western waters ;
Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves that drew
her,
Looking always, looking with necks reverted,
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills whereunder
Shone Mitylene ;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind her
Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,
As the thunder flung from the strong unclosing
Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with awful
Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her ;
While behind a clamour of singing women
Severed the twilight.

Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion !
All the Loves wept, listening ; sick with anguish,
Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo ;
Fear was upon them,

While the tenth sang wonderful things they knew
not.
Ah the tenth, the Lesbian ! the nine were silent,
None endured the sound of her song for weeping
Laurel by laurel,

Faded all their crowns ; but about her forehead,
Round her woven tresses and ashen temples
White as dead snow, paler than grass in summer,
Ravaged with kisses,

Shone a light of fire as a crown for ever.
Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite
Paused, and almost wept; such a song was that song.
Yea, by her name too

Called her, saying, " Turn to me, O my Sappho " ;
Yet she turned her face from the Loves, she saw not
Tears for laughter darken immortal eyelids,
Heard not about her

Fearful fitful wings of the doves departing,
Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite
Shook with weeping, saw not her shaken raiment,
Saw not her hands wrung ;

Saw the Lesbians kissing across their smitten
Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound of lute-strings,
Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand, her chosen,
Fairer than all men ;

Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,
Full of songs and kisses and little whispers,
Full of music ; only beheld among them
Soar, as a bird soars

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,
Made of perfect sound and exceeding passion,
Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,
Clothed with the wind's wings.

Then rejoiced she, laughing with love, and scattered
Roses, awful roses of holy blossom ;
Then the Loves thronged sadly with hidden faces
Round Aphrodite,

Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were silent ;
Yea, the gods waxed pale ; such a song was that song.
All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,
Fled from before her.

All withdrew long since, and the land was barren,
Full of fruitless women and music only.
Now perchance, when winds are assuaged at sunset,
Lulled at the dewfall,

By the grey sea-side, unassuaged, unheard of,
Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twilight,
Ghosts of outcast women return lamenting,
Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with tears, and singing
Songs that move the heart of the shaken heaven,
Songs that break the heart of the earth with pity,
Hearing, to hear them.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

LI

THE PRISONER

STILL, let my tyrants know, I am not doomed to wear
Year after year in gloom, and desolate despair ;
A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,
And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

He comes with western winds, with evening's wandering airs,
With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars.
Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,
And visions rise, and change, that kill me with desire.

Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,
When joy grew mad with awe, at counting future tears :
When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,
I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunderstorm.

But, first, a hush of peace—a soundless calm descends ;
The struggle of distress and fierce impatience ends ;
Mute music soothes my breast—unuttered harmony
That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

Then dawns the Invisible ; the Unseen its truth
reveals,
My outward sense is gone, my inward essence
feels ;
Its wings are almost free—its home, its harbour
found,
Measuring the gulph, it stoops and dares the final
bound.

Oh ! dreadful is the check—intense the agony—
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins
to see ;
When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think
again ;
The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the
chain.

Yet would I lose no sting, would wish no torture
less ;
The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will
bless ;
And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly
shine,
If it but herald Death, the vision is divine.

Emily Brontë.

LII

MY GARDEN

A GARDEN is a lovesome thing, God wot !
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Ferned grot—

The veriest school
Of peace ; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God ! in gardens ! when the eve is cool ?
Nay, but I have a sign ;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

Thomas Edward Brown.

LIII

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now !

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows !
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush ; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture !

And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower—
Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower.

Robert Browning.

LIV

THE *REVENGE*

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

1

AT Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away :
" Spanish ships of war at sea ! we have sighted fifty-three ! "
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard : " 'Fore God I am no coward ;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line ; can we fight with fifty-three ? "

2

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville : " I know you are no coward ;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.

But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

3

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven ;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below ;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

4

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
" Shall we fight or shall we fly ?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die !

There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

5

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little *Revenge* ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

6

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like *San Philip* that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

7

And while now the great *San Philip* hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

8

But anon the great *San Philip*, she bethought herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content ;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

9

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame ;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before ?

10

For he said " Fight on ! fight on ! "
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck ;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said " Fight on ! fight on ! "

11

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring ;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.

And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife ;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent ;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side ;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
" We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again !
We have won great glory, my men !
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when ?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain !
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain ! "

12

And the gunner said, " Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply :
" We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go ;

We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

13

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace ;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried :
" I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true ;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do :
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die ! "
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

14

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few ;
Was he devil or man ? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the deep,
And they mann'd the *Revenge* with a swarthier alien crew,

And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own ;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little *Revenge* herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LV

DARK ROSALEEN

O MY Dark Rosaleen,
Do not sigh, do not weep !
The priests are on the ocean green,
They march along the deep.
There's wine from the royal Pope,
Upon the ocean green ;
And Spanish ale shall give you hope,
My Dark Rosaleen !
My own Rosaleen !

Shall glad your heart, shall give you hope,
Shall give you health, and help, and hope,
My Dark Rosaleen !

Over hills, and thro' dales,
Have I roam'd for your sake ;
All yesterday I sail'd with sails
On river and on lake.
The Erne, at its highest flood,
I dash'd across unseen.
For there was lightning in my blood,
My Dark Rosaleen !
My own Rosaleen !
O, there was lightning in my blood,
Red lightning lighten'd thro' my blood,
My Dark Rosaleen !

All day long, in unrest,
To and fro do I move.
The very soul within my breast
Is wasted for you, love !
The heart in my bosom faints
To think of you, my Queen,
My life of life, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen !
My own Rosaleen !
To hear your sweet and sad complaints,
My life, my love, my saint of saints,
My Dark Rosaleen !

Woe and pain, pain and woe,
Are my lot, night and noon,
To see your bright face clouded so,
Like to the mournful moon.

But yet will I rear your throne
 Again in golden sheen ;
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,
 My Dark Rosaleen !
 My own Rosaleen !
'Tis you shall have the golden throne,
'Tis you shall reign, and reign alone,
 My Dark Rosaleen !

Over dews, over sands,
 Will I fly, for your weal :
Your holy delicate white hands
 Shall girdle me with steel.
At home, in your emerald bowers,
 From morning's dawn till e'en,
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
 My Dark Rosaleen !
 My fond Rosaleen !
You'll think of me thro' daylight hours,
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,
 My Dark Rosaleen !

I could scale the blue air,
 I could plough the high hills,
O, I could kneel all night in prayer,
 To heal your many ills !
And one beamy smile from you
 Would float like light between
My toils and me, my own, my true,
 My Dark Rosaleen !
 My fond Rosaleen !
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew,
 My Dark Rosaleen !

O, the Erne shall run red,
 With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
 And flames wrap hill and wood,
And gun-peal and slogan-cry
 Wake many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
 My Dark Rosaleen !
 My own Rosaleen !
The Judgement Hour must first be nigh,
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
 My Dark Rosaleen !

James Clarence Mangan.

LVI

THE EAGLE

He clasps the crag with crooked hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LVII

SUMMER EVENING

THE frog half fearful jumps across the path,
And little mouse that leaves its hole at eve
Nimbles with timid dread beneath the swath ;
My rustling steps awhile their joys deceive,
Till past,—and then the cricket sings more strong,
And grasshoppers in merry moods still wear
The short night weary with their fretting song.
Up from behind the molehill jumps the hare,
Cheat of his chosen bed, and from the bank
The yellowhammer flutters in short fears
From off its nest hid in the grasses rank,
And drops again when no more noise it hears.
Thus nature's human link and endless thrall,
Proud man, still seems the enemy of all.

John Clare.

LVIII

THE HEART AND NATURE

THE lake is calm ; and, calm, the skies
In yonder cloudless sunset glow,
Where, o'er the woodland, homeward flies
The solitary crow ;

No moan the cushat makes to heave
A leaflet round her windless nest ;
The air is silent in the eve ;
The world's at rest.

All bright below ; all pure above ;
No sense of pain, no sign of wrong ;
Save in thy heart of hopeless love,
Poor Child of Song !

Why must the soul through Nature rove,
At variance with her general plan ?
A stranger to the Power, whose love
Soothes all save Man ?

Why lack the strength of meaner creatures ?
The wandering sheep, the grazing kine,
Are surer of their simple natures
Than I of mine.

For all their wants the poorest land
Affords supply ; they browse and breed ;
I scarce divine, and ne'er have found,
What most I need.

O God, that in this human heart
Hast made belief so hard to grow,
And set the doubt, the pang, the smart
In all we know—

Why hast thou, too, in solemn jest
At this tormented Thinking-power,
Inscribed, in flame on yonder West,
In hues on every flower,

Through all the vast unthinking sphere
Of mere material Force without,
Rebuke so vehement and severe
To the least doubt ?

And robed the world, and hung the night,
With silent, stern, and solemn forms ;
And strown with sounds of awe, and might,
The seas and storms ;—

All lacking power to impart
To man the secret he assails,
But arm'd to crush him, if his heart
Once doubts or fails !

To make him feel the same forlorn
Despair, the Fiend hath felt ere now,
In gazing at the stern sweet scorn
On Michael's brow ?

Edward Robert, first Earl of Lytton.

LIX

TEARS, IDLE TEARS

TEARS, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LX

THEY say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep,
And Bahram, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, and he lies fast asleep.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled ;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in its Lap from some once lovely Head.

And this delightful Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly ! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen ?

Edward FitzGerald.

LXI

DREAM LAND

WHERE sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmèd sleep :
 Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
 Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight cold and lorn
 And water springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
 That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast ;
Her face is toward the west,
 The purple land.
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain ;
She cannot feel the rain
 Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore ;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
 Till time shall cease :
Sleep that no pain shall wake ;
Night that no morn shall break
Till joy shall overtake
 Her perfect peace.

Christina Rossetti.

LXII

MAY AND DEATH

I WISH that when you died last May,
 Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of spring's delightful things ;
 Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too.

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps !
 There must be many a pair of friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
 Moon-births and the long evening-ends.

So, for their sake, be May still May !
 Let their new time, as mine of old,
Do all it did for me : I bid
 Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

Only, one little sight, one plant,
 Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
 Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between.

That, they might spare ; a certain wood
Might miss the plant ; their loss were small :
But I,—whene'er the leaf grows there,
Its drop comes from my heart, that's all.

Robert Browning.

LXIII

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play !
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill ;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LXIV

DEPARTURE

It was not like your great and gracious ways.
Do you, that have nought other to lament,
Never, my Love, repent
Of how, that July afternoon,
You went,
With sudden, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,
Upon your journey of so many days,
Without a single kiss, or a good-bye ?
I knew, indeed, that you were parting soon ;
And so we sate, within the low sun's rays,
You whispering to me, for your voice was weak,
Your harrowing praise.
Well, it was well,
To hear you such things speak,
And I could tell
What made your eyes a glowing gloom of love,
As a warm South-wind sombres a March grove.
And it was like your great and gracious ways
To turn your talk on daily things, my Dear,
Lifting the luminous, pathetic lash
To let the laughter flash,
Whilst I drew near,
Because you spoke so low that I could scarcely hear.
But all at once to leave me at the last,
More at the wonder than the loss aghast,
With huddled, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,

And go your journey of all days
With not one kiss, or a good-bye,
And the only loveless look the look with which
you pass'd :
'Twas all unlike your great and gracious ways.

Coventry Patmore.

LXV

REQUIESCAT

STREW on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew !
In quiet she reposes ;
Ah, would that I did too !

Her mirth the world required ;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

Matthew Arnold.

LXVI

CALM is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall ;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LXVII

THE PORTRAIT

THIS is her picture as she was :
 It seems a thing to wonder on,
As though mine image in the glass
 Should tarry when myself am gone.
I gaze until she seems to stir,
Until mine eyes almost aver
 That now, even now, the sweet lips part
 To breathe the words of the sweet heart :—
And yet the earth is over her.

Alas ! even such the thin-drawn ray
 That makes the prison-depths more rude,—
The drip of water night and day
 Giving a tongue to solitude.
Yet only this, of love's whole prize,
Remains ; save what in mournful guise
 Takes counsel with my soul alone,—
 Save what is secret and unknown,
Below the earth, above the skies.

In painting her I shrined her face
 'Mid mystic trees, where light falls in
Hardly at all ; a covert place
 Where you might think to find a din
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame
Wandering, and many a shape whose name
 Not itself knoweth, and old dew,
 And your own footsteps meeting you,
And all things going as they came.

A deep dim wood ; and there she stands
 As in that wood that day : for so
Was the still movement of her hands
 And such the pure line's gracious flow.
And passing fair the type must seem,
Unknown the presence and the dream.
 'Tis she : though of herself, alas !
 Less than her shadow on the grass
Or than her image in the stream.

That day we met there, I and she
 One with the other all alone ;
And we were blithe ; yet memory
 Saddens those hours, as when the moon
Looks upon daylight. And with her
I stooped to drink the spring-water,
 Athirst where other waters sprang :
 And where the echo is, she sang,—
My soul another echo there.

But when that hour my soul won strength
 For words whose silence wastes and kills,
Dull raindrops smote us, and at length
 Thundered the heat within the hills.
That eve I spoke those words again
Beside the pelted window-pane ;
 And there she hearkened what I said,
 With under-glances that surveyed
The empty pastures blind with rain.

Next day the memories of these things,
 Like leaves through which a bird has flown,

Still vibrated with Love's warm wings ;
 Till I must make them all my own
And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease
Of talk and sweet long silences,
 She stood among the plants in bloom
 At windows of a summer room,
To feign the shadow of the trees.

And as I wrought, while all above
 And all around was fragrant air,
In the sick burthen of my love
 It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there
Beat like a heart among the leaves.
O heart that never beats nor heaves,
 In that one darkness lying still,
 What now to thee my love's great will
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves ?

For now doth daylight disavow
 Those days—nought left to see or hear.
Only in solemn whispers now
 At night-time these things reach mine ear ;
When the leaf-shadows at a breath
Shrink in the road, and all the heath,
 Forest and water, far and wide,
 In limpid starlight glorified,
Lie like the mystery of death.

Last night at last I could have slept,
 And yet delayed my sleep till dawn,
Still wandering. Then it was I wept :
 For unawares I came upon

Those glades where once she walked with me,
And as I stood there suddenly,
 All wan with traversing the night,
 Upon the desolate verge of light
Yearned loud the iron-bosomed sea.

Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears
 The beating heart of Love's own breast,—
Where round the secret of all spheres
 All angels lay their wings to rest,—
How shall my soul stand rapt and awed,
When, by the new birth borne abroad
 Throughout the music of the suns,
 It enters in her soul at once
And knows the silence there for God !

Here with her face doth memory sit
 Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,
Till other eyes shall look from it,
 Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
Even than the old gaze tenderer :
While hopes and aims long lost with her
 Stand round her image side by side,
 Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulchre.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

LXVIII

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill ;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes !
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest !

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use—
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
And here till sundown, shepherd ! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,

And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep ;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade ;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again !
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life enquired ;
Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
" And I," he said, " the secret of their art,
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart ;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

This said, he left them, and return'd no more.
But rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,
The same the gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring:
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;

And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more !—
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd, white anemony,
Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often pass'd thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown ;
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone !

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of grey,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill,

And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range ;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snow-flakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what—I dream ! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe ;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours !
For what wears out the life of mortal men ?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls ;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers.
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so ?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire ;
Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead !
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire !
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go ;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst—what we, alas ! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things ;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours !
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half-lives a hundred different lives ;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven ! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd;
For whom each year we see

Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new ;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—
Ah ! do not we, wanderer ! await it too ?

Yes, we await it !—but it still delays,
And then we suffer ! and amongst us one,
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne ;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days ;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest ! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear ;
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—
But none has hope like thine !
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames ;
Before this strange disease of modern life,

With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles !
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægæan isles ;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail ;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits ; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come ;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

Matthew Arnold.

LXIX

THYRSIS

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend,* ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, *who died at Florence,* 1861.

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills !
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same ;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks—
Are ye too changed, ye hills ?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays !
Here came I often, often, in old days—
Thyrsis and I ; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames ?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames ?—
This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air ! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers !
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night !—
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour ;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west—I miss it ! is it gone ?
We prized it dearly ; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead ;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick ;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd.
Ah me ! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday !
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart ;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates ; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest

He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head.
He went ; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground ;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day—
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze :
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I !

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go ?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow ;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not ! light comer, he is flown !
What matters it ? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see ;
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee !

Alack, for Corydon no rival now !—
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate ;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine !
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face ;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard !
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd ;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain !

Well ! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill !
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power ?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries ;

I know these slopes ; who knows them if not I ?—
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time ;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We track'd the shy Thames shore ?

Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass ?—
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well !

Yes, thou art gone ! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with grey ;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train ;—
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth ;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare !
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall ;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet!—Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field!—'Tis done; and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old !—
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing ;
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields ! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee !
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemonies in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still ; then why not me ?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine ; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew ;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold—
But the smooth-slipping weeks

Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired ;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone ;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound ;
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour !
Men gave thee nothing ; but this happy quest,
If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime !
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone ;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
It fail'd, and thou wast mute !
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here !
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis ! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
—Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear :
Why faintest thou ? I wander'd till I died.
Roam on ! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof ? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.

Matthew Arnold.

LXX

FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row !
So they row'd, and there we landed—" O venusta Sirmio ! "
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that " Ave atque Vale " of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago,

" Frater Ave atque Vale "—as we wander'd to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below,
Sweet Catullus' all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LXXI

TO VIRGIL

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre ;

Landscape-lover, lord of language
more than he that sang the Works and Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden phrase ;

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd ;
All the charm of all the Muses
often flowering in a lonely word ;

Poet of the happy Tityrus
piping underneath his beechen bowers ;
Poet of the poet-satyr
whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers ;

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless sea ;

Thou that seëst Universal
Nature moved by Universal Mind ;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human kind ;

Light among the vanish'd ages ;
star that gildest yet this phantom shore ;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to rise no more ;

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's dome—
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound for ever of Imperial Rome—

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the Northern Island
sunder'd once from all the human race,

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

LXXII

THE WOODSPURGE

THE wind flapped loose, the wind was still,
Shaken out dead from tree and hill :
I had walked on at the wind's will,—
I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was,—
My lips, drawn in, said not Alas !
My hair was over in the grass,
My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run
Of some ten weeds to fix upon ;
Among those few, out of the sun,
The woodspurge flowered, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be
Wisdom or even memory :
One thing then learnt remains to me,—
The woodspurge has a cup of three.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

LXXIII

GRIEF

I TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless ;
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access

Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness
In souls, as countries, lieth silent-bare
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death :
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe,
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
Touch it : the marble eyelids are not wet ;
If it could weep, it could arise and go.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

LXXIV

THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT

How the moon triumphs through the endless nights !
How the stars throb and glitter as they wheel
Their thick processions of supernal lights
Around the blue vault obdurate as steel !
And men regard with passionate awe and yearning
The mighty marching and the golden burning,
And think the heavens respond to what they feel.

Boats gliding like dark shadows of a dream,
Are glorified from vision as they pass
The quivering moonbridge on the deep black stream ;
Cold windows kindle their dead glooms of glass

To restless crystals ; cornice, dome, and column
Emerge from chaos in the splendour solemn ;
 Like faëry lakes gleam lawns of dewy grass.

With such a living light these dead eyes shine,
 These eyes of sightless heaven, that as we gaze
We read a pity, tremulous, divine,
 Or cold majestic scorn in their pure rays :
Fond man ! they are not haughty, are not tender ;
There is no heart or mind in all their splendour,
 They thread mere puppets all their marvellous
 maze.

If we could near them with the flight unflown,
 We should but find them worlds as sad as this,
Or suns all self-consuming like our own
 Enringed by planet worlds as much amiss :
They wax and wane through fusion and confusion ;
The spheres eternal are a grand illusion,
 The empyrean is a void abyss.

James Thomson.

LXXV

CONFESSIONS

WHAT is he buzzing in my ears ?
 " Now that I come to die,
Do I view the world as a vale of tears ? "
 Ah, reverend sir, not I !

What I viewed there once, what I view again
 Where the physic bottles stand

On the table's edge, is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry
O'er the garden wall: is the curtain blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June weather
Blue above land and wall;
And that farthest bottle labelled "Ether"
Is the house o'ertopping all.

At a terrace somewhere near the stopper,
There watched for me, one June,
A girl: I know, sir, it's improper,
My poor mind's out of tune.

Only, there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except:
They styled their house "The Lodge."

What right had a lounger up their lane?
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help,—their eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic, there,
By the rim of the bottle labelled "Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair,

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas,
We loved, sir—used to meet :
How sad and bad and mad it was—
But then, how it was sweet !

Robert Browning.

LXXVI

THE WOODCUTTER'S NIGHT-SONG

WELCOME, red and roundy sun,
Dropping lowly in the west ;
Now my hard day's work is done,
I'm as happy as the best.

Joyful are the thoughts of home,
Now I'm ready for my chair,
So, till morrow-morning's come,
Bill and mittens, lie ye there !

Though to leave your pretty song,
Little birds, it gives me pain,
Yet to-morrow is not long,
Then I'm with you all again.

If I stop, and stand about,
Well I know how things will be,
Judy will be looking out
Every now-and-then for me.

So fare ye well ! and hold your tongues,
Sing no more until I come ;
They're not worthy of your songs
That never care to drop a crumb.

All day long I love the oaks,
 But, at nights, yon little cot,
Where I see the chimney smokes,
 Is by far the prettiest spot.

Wife and children all are there,
 To revive with pleasant looks,
Table ready set, and chair,
 Supper hanging on the hooks.

Soon as ever I get in,
 When my faggot down I fling,
Little prattlers they begin
 Teasing me to talk and sing.

Welcome, red and roundy sun,
 Dropping lowly in the west ;
Now my hard day's work is done,
 I'm as happy as the best.

Joyful are the thoughts of home,
 Now I'm ready for my chair,
So, till morrow-morning's come,
 Bill and mittens, lie ye there !

John Clare.

LXXVII

WOAK HILL

WHEN sycamore leaves wer a-spreadèn
 Green-ruddy in hedges,
Bezide the red doust o' the ridges,
 A-dried at Woak Hill ;

I pack'd up my goods, all a-sheenèn
Wi' long years o' handlèn,
On dousty red wheels ov a waggon,
To ride at Woak Hill.

The brown thatchen ruf o' the dwellèn
I then wer a-leaven,
Had shelter'd the sleek head o' Meäry,
My bride at Woak Hill.

But now vor zome years, her light voot-vall
'S a-lost vrom the vloorèn.
To soon vor my jaÿ an' my childern
She died at Woak Hill.

But still I do think that, in soul,
She do hover about us ;
To ho vor her motherless childern,
Her pride at Woak Hill.

Zoo—lest she should tell me hereafter
I stole off 'ithout her,
An' left her, uncall'd at house-riddèn,
To bide at Woak Hill—

I call'd her so fondly, wi' lippèns
All soundless to others,
An' took her wi' air-reachèn hand
To my zide at Woak Hill.

On the road I did look round, a-talkèn
To light at my shoulder,
An' then led her in at the doorway,
Miles wide vrom Woak Hill.

An' that's why vo'k thought, vor a season,
My mind wer a-wandrèn
Wi' sorrow, when I wer so sorely
A-tried at Woak Hill.

But no ; that my Meäry mid never
Behold herzelf slighted,
I wanted to think that I guided
My guide vrom Woak Hill.

William Barnes.

LXXVIII

THE SANDS OF DEE

" O MARY, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee ; "
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land
And never home came she.

" Oh ! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress of golden hair,
A drownèd maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea ?

Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
 Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
 The cruel crawling foam,
 The cruel hungry foam,
 To her grave beside the sea :
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
 Across the sands of Dee.

Charles Kingsley.

LXXIX

A LITTLE while, a little while,
 The weary task is put away,
And I can sing and I can smile,
 Alike, while I have holiday.

Where wilt thou go, my harassed heart—
 What thought, what scene invites thee now ?
What spot, or near or far apart,
 Has rest for thee, my weary brow ?

There is a spot, 'mid barren hills,
 Where winter howls, and driving rain ;
But, if the dreary tempest chills,
 There is a light that warms again.

The house is old, the trees are bare,
 Moonless above bends twilight's dome ;
But what on earth is half so dear,
 So longed for, as the hearth of home ?

The mute bird sitting on the stone,
The dank moss dripping from the wall,
The thorn-trees gaunt, the walks o'ergrown,
I love them, how I love them all !

Still, as I mused, the naked room,
The alien firelight died away ;
And from the midst of cheerless gloom,
I passed to bright, unclouded day.

A little and a lone green lane
That opened on a common wide ;
A distant, dreamy, dim blue chain
Of mountains circling every side :

A heaven so clear, an earth so calm,
So sweet, so soft, so hushed an air ;
And, deepening still the dream-like charm,
Wild moor-sheep feeding everywhere.

That was the scene, I knew it well ;
I knew the turfy pathway's sweep,
That, winding o'er each billowy swell,
Marked out the tracks of wandering sheep.

Even as I stood with raptured eye,
Absorbed in bliss so deep and dear,
My hour of rest had fleeted by,
And back came labour, bondage, care.

Emily Brontë.

LXXX

THE SHRINE

THERE is a shrine whose golden gate
 Was opened by the Hand of God ;
It stands serene, inviolate,
 Though millions have its pavement trod ;
As fresh, as when the first sunrise
Awoke the lark in Paradise.

'Tis compassed with the dust and toil
 Of common days, yet should there fall
A single speck, a single soil
 Upon the whiteness of its wall,
The angels' tears in tender rain
Would make the temple theirs again.

Without, the world is tired and old,
 But, once within the enchanted door,
The mists of time are backward rolled,
 And creeds and ages are no more ;
But all the human-hearted meet
In one communion vast and sweet.

I enter—all is simply fair,
 Nor incense-clouds, nor carven throne ;
But in the fragrant morning air
 A gentle lady sits alone ;
My mother—ah ! whom should I see
Within, save ever only thee ?

Digby Mackworth Dolben.

LXXXI

MOTHER AND SON

Now sleeps the land of houses,
and dead night holds the street,
And there thou liest, my baby,
and sleepest soft and sweet ;
My man is away for awhile,
but safe and alone we lie,
And none heareth thy breath but thy mother,
and the moon looking down from the sky
On the weary waste of the town,
as it looked on the grass-edged road
Still warm with yesterday's sun,
when I left my old abode ;
Hand in hand with my love,
that night of all nights in the year ;
When the river of love o'erflowed
and drowned all doubt and fear,
And we two were alone in the world,
and once if never again,
We knew of the secret of earth
and the tale of its labour and pain.

Lo amidst London I lift thee,
and how little and light thou art,
And thou without hope or fear
thou fear and hope of my heart !
Lo here thy body beginning,
O son, and thy soul and thy life ;
But how will it be if thou livest.
and enterest into the strife,

And in love we dwell together
when the man is grown in thee,
When thy sweet speech I shall hearken,
and yet 'twixt thee and me
Shall rise that wall of distance,
that round each one doth grow,
And maketh it hard and bitter
each other's thought to know?
Now, therefore, while yet thou art little
and hast no thought of thine own,
I will tell thee a word of the world;
of the hope whence thou hast grown;
Of the love that once begat thee,
of the sorrow that hath made
Thy little heart of hunger,
and thy hands on my bosom laid.
Then mayst thou remember hereafter
as whiles when people say
All this hath happened before
in the life of another day;
So mayst thou dimly remember
this tale of thy mother's voice,
As oft in the calm of dawning
I have heard the birds rejoice,
As oft I have heard the storm-wind
go moaning through the wood;
And I knew that earth was speaking,
and the mother's voice was good.

Now, to thee alone will I tell it
that thy mother's body is fair,
In the guise of the country maidens
who play with the sun and the air;

Who have stood in the row of the reapers
in the August afternoon,
Who have sat by the frozen water
in the high day of the moon,
When the lights of the Christmas feasting
were dead in the house on the hill,
And the wild geese gone to the salt-marsh
had left the winter still.
Yea, I am fair, my firstling ;
if thou couldst but remember me !
The hair that thy small hand clutcheth
is a goodly sight to see ;
I am true, but my face is a snare ;
soft and deep are my eyes,
And they seem for men's beguiling
fulfilled with the dreams of the wise.
Kind are my lips, and they look
as though my soul had learned
Deep things I have never heard of.
my face and my hands are burned
By the lovely sun of the acres ;
three months of London town
And thy birth-bed have bleached them indeed,
" But lo, where the edge of the gown "
(So said thy father) " is parting
the wrist that is white as the curd
From the brown of the hand that I love,
bright as the wing of a bird."

Such is thy mother, O firstling,
yet strong as the maidens of old,
Whose spears and whose swords were the warders
of homestead, of field and of fold.

Oft were my feet on the highway,
often they wearied the grass ;
From dusk unto dusk of the summer
three times in a week would I pass
To the downs from the house on the river
through the waves of the blossoming corn.
Fair then I lay down in the even,
and fresh I arose on the morn,
And scarce in the noon was I weary.
Ah, son, in the days of thy strife,
If thy soul could but harbour a dream
of the blossom of my life !
It would be as the sunlit meadows
beheld from a tossing sea,
And the soul should look on a vision
of the peace that is to be.

Yet, yet the tears on my cheek !
and what is this doth move
My heart to thy heart, beloved,
save the flood of yearning love ?
For fair and fierce is thy father,
and soft and strange are his eyes
That look on the days that shall be
with the hope of the brave and the wise.
It was many a day that we laughed,
as over the meadows we walked,
And many a day I hearkened
and the pictures came as he talked ;
It was many a day that we longed,
and we lingered late at eve
Ere speech from speech was sundered,
and my hand his hand could leave.

Then I wept when I was alone,
and I longed till the daylight came ;
And down the stairs I stole,
and there was our housekeeping dame
(No mother of me, the foundling)
kindling the fire betimes
Ere the haymaking folk went forth
to the meadows down by the limes ;
All things I saw at a glance ;
the quickening fire-tongues leapt
Through the crackling heap of sticks,
and the sweet smoke up from it crept,
And close to the very hearth
the low sun flooded the floor,
And the cat and her kittens played
in the sun by the open door.
The garden was fair in the morning,
and there in the road he stood
Beyond the crimson daisies
and the bush of southernwood.
Then side by side together
through the grey-walled place we went,
And O the fear departed,
and the rest and sweet content !

Son, sorrow and wisdom he taught me,
and sore I grieved and learned
As we twain grew into one ;
and the heart within me burned
With the very hopes of his heart.
Ah, son, it is piteous,
But never again in my life
shall I dare to speak to thee thus ;

So may these lonely words
about thee creep and cling,
These words of the lonely night
in the days of our wayfaring.
Many a child of woman
to-night is born in the town,
The desert of folly and wrong ;
and of what and whence are they grown ?
Many and many an one
of wont and use is born ;
For a husband is taken to bed
as a hat or a ribbon is worn.
Prudence begets her thousands ;
" good is a housekeeper's life,
So shall I sell my body
that I may be matron and wife."
" And I shall endure foul wedlock
and bear the children of need."
Some are there born of hate,
many the children of greed.
" I, I too can be wedded,
though thou my love hast got."
" I am fair and hard of heart,
and riches shall be my lot."
And all these are the good and the happy,
on whom the world dawns fair.
O son, when wilt thou learn
of those that are born of despair,
As the fabled mud of the Nile
that quickens under the sun
With a growth of creeping things,
half dead when just begun ?

E'en such is the care of Nature
that man should never die,
Though she breed of the fools of the earth,
and the dregs of the city sty.
But thou, O son, O son,
of very love wert born,
When our hope fulfilled bred hope,
and fear was a folly outworn.
On the eve of the toil and the battle
all sorrow and grief we weighed,
We hoped and we were not ashamed,
we knew and we were not afraid.

Now waneth the night and the moon ;
ah, son, it is piteous
That never again in my life
shall I dare to speak to thee thus.
But sure from the wise and the simple
shall the mighty come to birth ;
And fair were my fate, beloved,
if I be yet on the earth
When the world is awaken at last,
and from mouth to mouth they tell
Of thy love and thy deeds and thy valour,
and thy hope that nought can quell.

William Morris.

LXXXII

AIRLY BEACON

AIRLY BEACON, Airly Beacon ;
Oh the pleasant sight to see

Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,
While my love climbed up to me !

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon ;
Oh the happy hours we lay
Deep in fern on Airly Beacon,
Courting through the summer's day !

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon ;
Oh the weary haunt for me,
All alone on Airly Beacon,
With his baby on my knee !

Charles Kingsley.

LXXXIII

THE TOYS

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him, and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own ;

For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said :
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood,
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
" I will be sorry for their childishness."

Coventry Patmore.

LXXXIV

OMAR'S LAMENT

ALAS, that Spring should vanish with the Rose !
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close !
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows !

Ah Love ! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
 Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire ?

Edward FitzGerald.

LXXXV

DREAMS

It looks as if in dreams the soul was free,
 No bodily limit checks its absolute play ;
Then why doth it not use its liberty,
 And clear a certain way
To further truth beyond the actual sea ?

It is not so ; for when, with loosened grip,
 The warder sense unlocks the visible hold,
Then will my soul from forth its chamber slip,
 An idiot blithe and bold,
And into vacancy of folly skip ;

Or aimless wander on the poppied floor
 Of gaudy fields, or, scarce upon the street,
Return unto the grim, familiar door,
 And, coward, crave retreat,
As who had never been outside before.

What boots it that I hold the chartered space,
 If I but fill it with th' accustomed forms,
And load its breathless essence with the trace
 Of casual-risen storms,
And drag my chain along the lovely place ?

O, but if God would make a deep suspense,
 And draw me perfect from th' adhesive sheath ;
If all the veils and swathings of pretence,
 Dropt from me, sunk beneath,
Then would I get me very far from hence.

I'd come to Him with one swift arrow-dart,
 Aimed at the zenith of th' o'erbrooding blue ;
Straight to the centre of His awful heart
 The flight long-winged and true
Should bear me rapt through all the spheres that part.

But as it is, it is a waste of rest.
 God uses not the occasion ; on the rock
Stands prone my soul, a diver lean undrest,
 And looks, and fears the shock,
And turns and hides its shame with some poor sorry jest.

Thomas Edward Brown.

LXXXVI

LOST DAYS

THE lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell ? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay ?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay ?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet ?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of Hell, athirst alway ?

I do not see them here ; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
" I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me ? "
" And I—and I—thyself," (lo ! each one saith,)
" And thou thyself to all eternity ! "

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

LXXXVII

SAY not the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars ;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main,

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright !

Arthur Hugh Clough.

LXXXVIII

THE PAGAN WORLD

In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay ;
He drove abroad, in furious guise,
Along the Appian way.

He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crown'd his hair with flowers—
No easier nor no quicker pass'd
The impracticable hours.

The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world.
The Roman tempest swell'd and swell'd,
And on her head was hurl'd.

The East bow'd low before the blast
In patient, deep disdain ;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

So well she mused, a morning broke
Across her spirit grey ;
A conquering, new-born joy awoke,
And fill'd her life with day.

" Poor world," she cried, " so deep accurst,
That runn'st from pole to pole
To seek a draught to slake thy thirst—
Go, seek it in thy soul ! "

She heard it, the victorious West,
In crown and sword array'd !
She felt the void which mined her breast,
She shiver'd and obey'd.

She veil'd her eagles, snapp'd her sword,
And laid her sceptre down ;
Her stately purple she abhorr'd,
And her imperial crown.

She broke her flutes, she stopp'd her sports,
Her artists could not please ;
She tore her books, she shut her courts,
She fled her palaces ;

Lust of the eye and pride of life
She left it all behind,
And hurried, torn with inward strife,
The wilderness to find.

Tears wash'd the trouble from her face !
She changed into a child !
'Mid weeds and wrecks she stood—a place
Of ruin—but she smiled !

Matthew Arnold.

LXXXIX

HE WOULD HAVE HIS LADY SING

SING me the men ere this
Who, to the gate that is
A cloven pearl uprapt,

The big white bars between
With dying eyes have seen
The sea of jasper, lapt
About with crystal sheen ;

And all the far pleasance
Where linkèd Angels dance,
With scarlet wings that fall
Magnifical, or spread
Most sweetly over-head,
In fashion musical,
Of cadenced lutes instead.

Sing me the town they saw
Withouten fleck or flaw,
Aflame, more fine than glass
Of fair Abbayes the boast,
More glad than wax of cost
Doth make at Candlemas
The Lifting of the Host :

Where many Knights and Dames,
With new and wondrous names,
One great Laudate Psalm
Go singing down the street ;—
'Tis peace upon their feet,
In hand 'tis pilgrim palm
Of Goddes Land so sweet :—

Where Mother Mary walks
In silver lily stalks,
Star-tired, moon-bedight ;

Where Cecily is seen,
With Dorothy in green,
And Magdalen all white,
The Maidens of the Queen.

Sing on—the Steps untrod,
The Temple that is God,
Where incense doth ascend,
Where mount the cries and tears
Of all the dolorous years,
With moan that ladies send
Of durance and sore fears :—

And Him who sitteth there,
The Christ of purple hair,
And great eyes deep with ruth,
Who is of all things fair
That shall be, or that were,
The sum, and very truth.
Then add a little prayer,

That since all these be so,
Our Liege, who doth us know,
Would fend from Sathanas,
And bring us, of His grace,
To that His joyous place :
So we the Doom may pass,
And see Him in the Face.

Digby Mackworth Dolben.

XC

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

THE blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven ;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even ;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn ;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers ;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers ;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing : the autumn-fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on ;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun ;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names ;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm ;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path ; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now ; the curled moon
 Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf ; and now
 She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
 Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet ! Even now, in that bird's song
 Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened ? When those bells
 Possessed the midday air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
 Down all the echoing stair ?)

" I wish that he were come to me,
 For he will come," she said.
" Have I not prayed in Heaven ?—on earth,
 Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd ?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength ?
 And shall I feel afraid ?

" When round his head the aureole clings,
 And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
 To the deep wells of light ;
As unto a stream we will step down,
 And bathe there in God's sight.

" We two will stand beside that shrine,
 Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
 With prayer sent up to God ;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
 Each like a little cloud.

" We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

" And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here ; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas ! we two, we two, thou say'st !
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee ?)

" We two," she said, " will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

" Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded ;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

" He shall fear, haply, and be dumb.
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak :
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

" Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles :
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

" There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me :—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,—only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
" All this is when he comes." She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres :
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

XCI

MIMNERMUS IN CHURCH

You promise heavens free from strife,
 Pure truth, and perfect change of will ;
But sweet, sweet is this human life,
 So sweet, I fain would breathe it still ;
Your chilly stars I can forgo,
This warm kind world is all I know.

You say there is no substance here,
 One great reality above :
Back from that void I shrink in fear,
 And child-like hide myself in love :
Show me what angels feel. Till then,
I cling, a mere weak man, to men.

You bid me lift my mean desires
 From faltering lips and fitful veins
To sexless souls, ideal quires,
 Unwearied voices, wordless strains :
My mind with fonder welcome owns
One dear dead friend's remembered tones.

Forsooth the present we must give
 To that which cannot pass away ;
All beauteous things for which we live
 By laws of time and space decay.
But oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die.

William Cory.

XCII

THE OLD STOIC

RICHES I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn ;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn :

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, " Leave the heart that now I bear
And give me liberty ! "

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore ;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

Emily Brontë.

XCIII

IN spring and summer winds may blow,
And rains fall after, hard and fast ;
The tender leaves, if beaten low,
Shine but the more for shower and blast.

But when their fated hour arrives,
When reapers long have left the field,
When maidens rifle turn'd-up hives,
And their last juice fresh apples yield,

A leaf perhaps may still remain
Upon some solitary tree,
Spite of the wind and of the rain . .
A thing you heed not if you see.

At last it falls. Who cares? Not one:
And yet no power on earth can ever
Replace the fallen leaf upon
Its spray, so easy to dissever.

If such be love, I dare not say.
Friendship is such, too well I know:
I have enjoyed my summer day;
'Tis past; my leaf now lies below.

Walter Savage Landor

XCIV

QUA CURSUM VENTUS

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day
Are scarce long leagues apart descried;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
By each was cleaving, side by side:

E'en so—but why the tale reveal
Of those whom, year by year unchanged,
Brief absence joined anew to feel,
Astounded, soul from soul estranged ?

At dead of night their sails were filled,
And onward each rejoicing steered—
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,
Or wist, what first with dawn appeared !

To veer, how vain ! On, onward strain,
Brave barks ! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides—
To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze ! and O great seas,
Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought,
One purpose hold where'er they fare,—
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas !
At last, at last, unite them there !

Arthur Hugh Clough.

XCV

SONG

THE feathers of the willow
Are half of them grown yellow
Above the swelling stream ;

And ragged are the bushes,
And rusty now the rushes,
And wild the clouded gleam.

The thistle now is older,
His stalk begins to moulder,
His head is white as snow ;
The branches all are barer,
The linnet's song is rarer,
The robin pipeth now.

Richard Watson Dixon.

XCVI

NOVEMBER

ARE thine eyes weary ? is thy heart too sick
To struggle any more with doubt and thought,
Whose formless veil draws darkening now and thick
Across thee, e'en as smoke-tinged mist-wreaths brought
Down a fair dale to make it blind and nought ?
Art thou so weary that no world there seems
Beyond these four walls, hung with pain and dreams ?

Look out upon the real world, where the moon,
Half-way 'twixt root and crown of these high trees,
Turns the dead midnight into dreamy noon,
Silent and full of wonders, for the breeze

Died at the sunset, and no images,
No hopes of day, are left in sky or earth—
Is it not fair, and of most wondrous worth ?

Yea, I have looked, and seen November there ;
The changeless seal of change it seemed to be,
Fair death of things that, living once, were fair ;
Bright sign of loneliness too great for me,
Strange image of the dread eternity,
In whose void patience how can these have part,
These outstretched feverish hands, this restless heart ?

William Morris.

XCVII

LOST ON BOTH SIDES

As when two men have loved a woman well,
Each hating each, through Love's and Death's deceit ;
Since not for either this stark marriage-sheet
And the long pauses of this wedding-bell ;
Yet o'er her grave the night and day dispel
At last their feud forlorn, with cold and heat ;
Nor other than dear friends to death may fleet
The two lives left that most of her can tell :—

So separate hopes, which in a soul had wooed
The one same Peace, strove with each other long,
And Peace before their faces perished since :
So through that soul, in restless brotherhood,
They roam together now, and wind among
Its bye-streets, knocking at the dusty inns.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

XCVIII

HEAP cassia, sandal-buds and stripes
Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,
Smeared with dull nard an Indian wipes
From out her hair : such balsam falls
Down seaside mountain pedestals,
From tree-tops where tired winds are fain,
Spent with the vast and howling main,
To treasure half their island-gain.

And strew faint sweetness from some old
Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled ;
Or shredded perfume, like a cloud
From closet long to quiet vowed,
With mothed and dropping arras hung,
Mouldering her lute and books among,
As when a queen, long dead, was young.

Robert Browning.

XCIX

SILENCE

THERE is a silence where hath been no sound ;
There is a silence where no sound may be ;
In the cold grave, under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert, where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound.
No voice is hushed, no life treads silently ;
But cloud, and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground.

But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox, or wild hyaena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

Thomas Hood.

C

NOT on sad Stygian shore, nor in clear sheen
Of far Elysian plain, shall we meet those
Among the dead whose pupils we have been,
Nor those great shades whom we have held as foes ;
No meadow of asphodel our feet shall tread,
Nor shall we look each other in the face
To love or hate each other being dead,
Hoping some praise, or fearing some disgrace.
We shall not argue, saying " 'Twas thus," or
" thus,"
Our argument's whole drift we shall forget ;
Who's right, who's wrong, 'twill be all one to us ;
We shall not even know that we have met.
Yet meet we shall, and part, and meet again,
Where dead men meet, on lips of living men.

Samuel Butler.

CI

FAME is a food that dead men eat,—
I have no stomach for such meat.

In little light and narrow room,
They eat it in the silent tomb,
With no kind voice of comrade near
To bid the feaster be of cheer.

But friendship is a nobler thing,—
Of Friendship it is good to sing.
For truly, when a man shall end,
He lives in memory of his friend,
Who doth his better part recall
And of his fault make funeral.

Austin Dobson.

CII

ON A LUTE FOUND IN A SARCOPHAGUS

WHAT curled and scented sun-girls, almond-eyed,
With lotus blossoms in their hands and hair,
Have made their swarthy lovers call them fair,
With these spent strings, when brutes were deified
And Memnon in the sunrise sprang and cried,
And love-winds smote Bubastis, and the bare
Black breasts of carven Pasht received the prayer
Of suppliants bearing gifts from far and wide !

This lute has outsung Egypt ; all the lives
Of violent passion, and the vast calm art
That lasts in granite only, all lie dead ;
This little bird of song alone survives,
As fresh as when its fluting smote the heart
Last time the brown slave wore it garlanded.

Edmund Gosse.

CIII

MAGNA EST VERITAS

HERE, in this little Bay,
Full of tumultuous life and great repose,
Where, twice a day,
The purposeless, glad ocean comes and goes,
Under high cliffs, and far from the huge town,
I sit me down.
For want of me the world's course will not fail:
When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;
The truth is great, and shall prevail,
When none cares whether it prevail or not.

Coventry Patmore.

CIV

LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

ON a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
Above the rolling ball in cloud part screened,
Where sinners hugged their spectre of repose.
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he leaned,
Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened,
Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

George Meredith.

CV

THERE rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

CVI

THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD

LEAD, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path, but now
Lead Thou me on!

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will : remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone ;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile

John Henry, Cardinal Newman.

CVII

" WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLENESS, NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING "

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so :
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

Arthur Hugh Clough.

CVIII

A spirit haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :
To himself he talks ;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks ;

Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers :
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death ;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

CIX

ODE ON ADVANCING AGE

THOU goest more and more
To the silent things : thy hair is hoar,
Emptier thy weary face : like to the shore
Far-ruined, and the desolate billow white,
That recedes and leaves it waif-wrinkled, gap-rocked, weak.

The shore and the billow white
Groan, they cry and rest not : they would speak,
And call the eternal Night
To cease them for ever, bidding new things issue
From her cold tissue :
Night that is ever young, nor knows decay,
Though older by eternity than they.

Go down upon the shore.
The breakers dash, the smitten spray drops to
the roar ;
The spit upsprings, and drops again,
Where'er the white waves clash in the main.
Their sound is but one : 'tis the cry
That has risen from of old to the sky,
'Tis their silence !
Go now from the shore
Far-ruined : the grey shingly floor
To thy crashing step answers ; the doteril cries,
And on dipping wing flies :
'Tis their silence !
And thou, oh thou
To that wild silence sinkest now.
No more remains to thee than the cry of silence,
the cry
Of the waves, of the shore, of the bird to the sky.
The bald eyes 'neath as bald a brow
Ask but what nature gives
To the inarticulate cries
Of the waves, of the shore, of the bird.
Earth in earth thou art being interred :
No longer in thee lives
The lordly essence which was unlike all,

That was thy flower of soul, the imperial
Glory that separated thee
From all others that might be.

Thy dog hath died before.
Didst thou not mark him ? did he not neglect
What roused his rapture once, but still loved thee ?
Till, weaker grown, was he not fain reject
Thy pitying hand, thy meat and drink,
For all thou could'st implore ?
Then, at the last, how mournfully
Did not his eyelids sink
With wearied sighs ?
He sought at last that never-moving night
Which is the same in darkness, as in light,
The closing of the eyes.

So, Age, thou dealest us
To the elements : but no ! Resume thy pride,
O man, that musest thus.
Be to the end what thou hast been before :
The ancient joy shall wrap thee still—the tide
Return upon the shore.

Richard Watson Dixon.

CX

PLAY THEN AND SING !

PLAY then and sing ; we too have played,
We likewise, in that subtle shade.
We too have twisted through our hair
Such tendrils as the wild Loves wear,

And heard what mirth the Mænads made,
Till the wind blew our garlands bare
And left their roses disarrayed,
And smote the summer with strange air,
And disengirdled and discrowned
The limbs and locks that vine-wreaths bound.

We too have tracked by star-proof trees
The tempest of the Thyiades
Scare the loud night on hills that hid
The blood-feasts of the Bassarid,
Heard their song's iron cadences
Fright the wolf hungering from the kid,
Outroar the lion-throated seas,
Outchide the north-wind if it chid,
And hush the torrent-tongued ravines
With thunders of their tambourines.

But the fierce flute whose notes acclaim
Dim goddesses of fiery fame,
Cymbal and clamorous kettledrum,
Timbrels and tabrets, all are dumb
That turned the high chill air to flame ;
The singing tongues of fire are numb
That called on Cotys by her name
Edonian, till they felt her come
And maddened, and her mystic face
Lightened along the streams of Thrace.

For Pleasure slumberless and pale,
And Passion with rejected veil,
Pass, and the tempest-footed throng
Of hours that follow them with song

Till their feet flag and voices fail,
 And lips that were so loud so long
Learn silence, or a wearier wail ;
 So keen is change, and time so strong,
To weave the robes of life and rend
And weave again till life have end.

But weak is change, but strengthless time,
To take the light from heaven, or climb
 The hills of heaven with wasting feet.
 Songs they can stop that earth found meet,
But the stars keep their ageless rhyme ;
 Flowers they can slay that spring thought sweet
But the stars keep their spring sublime ;
 Passions and pleasures can defeat,
Actions and agonies control,
And life and death, but not the soul.

Because man's soul is man's God still,
What wind soever waft his will
 Across the waves of day and night
 To port or shipwreck, left or right,
By shores and shoals of good and ill ;
 And still its flame at mainmast height
Through the rent air that foam-flakes fill
 Sustains the indomitable light
Whence only man hath strength to steer
Or helm to handle without fear.

Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led,
 Across birth's hidden harbour-bar,
 Past youth where shoreward shallows are,

Through age that drives on toward the red
 Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
To the equal waters of the dead ;
 Save his own soul he hath no star,
And sinks, except his own soul guide,
Helmless in middle turn of tide.

No blast of air or fire of sun
Puts out the light whereby we run
 With girdled loins our lamplit race,
 And each from each takes heart of grace
And spirit till his turn be done,
 And light of face from each man's face
In whom the light of trust is one ;
 Since only souls that keep their place
By their own light, and watch things roll,
And stand, have light for any soul.

A little time we gain from time
To set our seasons in some chime,
 For harsh or sweet or loud or low,
 With seasons played out long ago
And souls that in their time and prime
 Took part with summer or with snow,
Lived abject lives out or sublime,
 And had their chance of seed to sow
For service or disservice done
To those days dead and this their son.

A little time that we may fill
Or with such good works or such ill
 As loose the bonds or make them strong
 Wherein all manhood suffers wrong.

By rose-hung river and light-foot rill
There are who rest not ; who think long
Till they discern as from a hill
At the sun's hour of morning song,
Known of souls only, and those souls free,
The sacred spaces of the sea.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

CXI

I STROVE with none, for none was worth my strife.
Nature I loved and, next to Nature, Art :
I warm'd both hands before the fire of life ;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Walter Savage Landor.

CXII

DIRGE IN WOODS

A WIND sways the pines,
And below
Not a breath of wild air ;
Still as the mosses that glow
On the flooring and over the lines
Of the roots here and there

The pine-tree drops its dead ;
They are quiet as under the sea.

Overhead, overhead
Rushes life in a race,
As the clouds the clouds chase ;
And we go,
And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
Even we,
Even so.

George Meredith.

CXIII

A FAREWELL

FLOW down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver :
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river :
No where by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver ;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver ;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

CXIV

THE CHOICE

THINK thou and act ; to-morrow thou shalt die.
Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,
Thou say'st : " Man's measured path is all gone o'er :
Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
Man clomb until he touched the truth ; and I,
Even I, am he whom it was destined for."
How should this be ? Art thou then so much more
Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap thereby ?

Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound
Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me ;
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drown'd.
Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

CXV

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere :
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity !
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee !

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts : unutterably vain ;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity ;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide embracing love
Thy Spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void :
Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

Emily Brontë.

CXVI

EARLY SPRING

ONCE more the Heavenly Power
 Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
 With loving blue ;
The blackbirds have their wills,
 The throstles too.

Opens a door in Heaven ;
 From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
 On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
 Young angels pass.

Before them fleets the shower,
 And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
 And flash the floods ;
The stars are from their hands
 Flung thro' the woods,

The woods with living airs
 How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
 All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
 Heard by the land.

O follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure !
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure !

Past, Future glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell !

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew ;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

SUMMARY OF BOOK I

(The Victorian Age)

A generation which has reacted with some violence from the literary ideals and standards of the Victorian age, and has disparaged the longer and more ambitious works of its poets, has never had the hardihood to deny the greatness of that age's achievement in lyric poetry. As we pass from Palgrave's Book IV., the age of Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, and Keats, there is no breach of continuity and no real falling-off. The influence of the preceding age is strongly felt—of Wordsworth in Arnold and Clough, of Keats and Byron in Tennyson, of Shelley in Swinburne and Christina Rossetti. Yet the poetry is always individual and also characteristic of its own time; there is more subtlety and complexity than ever before; a continual reaching-out to fresh things in artistic experiment; elaborate portraiture or pictorial description, or new metrical effects; a seeking to express finer shades of feeling till the sense almost swoons away in music. It is an age of scientific advance and mechanical invention; but of this there is scarcely

an echo here. It is also an age to which historical studies have brought a more vivid realisation of the vanished past, whether of classic (L., LXXI., CII.) or of mediæval times (XVII,) or of the Elizabethans (LIV.). Sympathy with Nature is as deep as in Wordsworth, though there is not the same assurance that "Every flower enjoys the air it breathes". There are traces of "sick fatigue" and "languid doubt" (LXVIII.); creeds are shaken, and the poet's faith, even when it triumphs, is assuredly not light-hearted (LXXXVII., XCIV., CXIV., CXV.). The world seems growing old (CIX., CXII.), though Nature and Poetry ever renew their youth (I., CXVI.).

J. H. F.

NOTES

Poems in this collection are referred to by Roman numerals simply ; poems in Palgrave (the authorised edition, not incomplete reprints) by the letters G.T. and ordinary numerals. O.B.V. = *Oxford Book of Verse.*

Notes by Mr. Binyon are in inverted commas, followed by the initial (B.).

Metre.—A few of the classical names for metrical feet, familiar to nearly all English poets, are used in these notes for convenience : but their use does not imply that English verse (outside some rare experiments) is quantitative : syllables marked long (–) are stressed syllables, syllables marked short (⏑) are unstressed.

1. The myrrh-tree (*Balsamodendron myrrha*) is a real ' unfabled ' tree in Arabia, though the phœnix is mythical. This bird was believed to live for 500 years (or for 100, as in this poem) and then to burn itself in a nest of the myrrh-tree ; from its ashes a new phœnix arose to be its successor. It is a favourite bird of the older English poets, receiving splendid commemoration in Shakespeare and Milton. Cp. CXXII. for an application of the image of the phœnix and the nest of spices. St. 1, **chalicing** : offering its flower-chalices (Lat. *calices*, buds) to fill the air with scent.

" From *Nepenthe*, privately printed in or about

1839 ; a strange and difficult poem, rich in imaginative splendours " (B.). By setting this excerpt first in his anthology, the editor suggests the permanence of poetic inspiration, renewing itself in each succeeding age.

GEORGE DARLEY (1795–1846) was a poet, critic, and mathematician, whose verse was admired by Charles Lamb.

II. By the simple device of setting the chief pauses in the middle of the rhymed octosyllabic couplet instead of at the end, Morris has given this familiar metre a character quite different from that which it wears in Scott, Wordsworth, or Byron. Other characteristics are (1) the simple but vivid epithets of colour, (2) the preference for Teutonic over Latin words. The version here given is from *Poems by the Way* ; a slightly different version is in *The Life and Death of Jason*, Bk. IV.

III. The poet dreads the failure of imagination. With this invocation of Fancy cp. Keats's poem, " Ever let the Fancy roam " (G.T. 318), Tennyson's youthful *Ode to Memory*, and, on a loftier plane, the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*, Bk. III.

R. W. DIXON (1833–1900) was a schoolfellow of Edward Burne-Jones at King Edward's School, Birmingham, and a friend of Burne-Jones and W. Morris at Oxford. He was afterwards a Minor Canon of Carlisle Cathedral, and wrote a history of the English Reformation besides several volumes of poems.

IV. The poetess seeks to justify her choice of mystic communion with the Unseen as the supreme aim of her life. Her own soul can grant her prayer because, by withdrawing into her own thoughts, she can command the divine visions that come. LI. and CXV. should be read along with this.

EMILY BRONTË (1818–1848) is remembered for her powerful novel, *Wuthering Heights*, and a few very remarkable poems. Matthew Arnold wrote of her as one

> whose soul
> Knew no fellow for might,
> Passion, vehemence, grief,
> Daring, since Byron died ;

and Swinburne thought her a greater genius than her sister Charlotte.

v. There is something of Shelley, and something possibly of Tennyson and of E. A. Poe, in these verses, which nevertheless seem based upon a real experience of Arnold's own—perhaps the strong attraction of the Swiss girl Marguerite, the theme of several of his lyrics : see XLIX.

VI. In the spirit of Michael Angelo's Sibyls, the heathen prophetesses who alternate with the Hebrew prophets in the Sistine Chapel, Rossetti conceives a prophetess of Beauty, bearing a palm in token of supremacy. With Rossetti the pursuit of beauty is a restless passion, very different from the serene joy that is reached in Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (" Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, this is all Ye know on earth and all ye need to know ") or his *Endymion* (" A thing of beauty is a joy for ever "), though even in Keats the joy is touched by sadness at the brevity of human life, and " in the very temple of Delight Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine " (*Ode on Melancholy*).

VII. Remarkable in its concentrated force and in the haunting effect of the repetitions which subtly convey the sound of wind murmuring in the sedges. The poet here deliberately rejects the

'pathetic fallacy': the song is in man's heart, not in external nature. As Coleridge said:

> We receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does Nature live.

We may compare the fine description of the sound made by the dry heather-bells in autumn on 'Egdon Heath', in Hardy's *Return of the Native*, Bk. I. ch. vi.

VIII. The poet is a reed out of which the gods fashion a musical instrument, but Pan (the Pagan god of Nature) is heedless of the suffering through which the instrument is perfected: most poets (as Shelley says) "learn in suffering what they teach in song". *Metre.*—Four accents in lines 1, 3, 4, 5, three accents in lines 2 and 6 of each stanza. The feet are mostly dactyls and trochees, but a fine effect is got by the monosyllabic feet in the first line of stanza 6.

IX. Tennyson's *Lotos-Eaters* was one of the chief poems in his first important volume, 1833. It is founded on an episode in the wanderings of Odysseus (Ulysses) on his homeward voyage from Troy, as related in Bk. IX. of Homer's *Odyssey*. The Choric Song, here printed without the introductory narrative in Spenserian stanzas, is seen to be complete in itself and one of the greatest English Odes in irregular rhymed verse. In its doctrine it is far from representing Tennyson's deliberate philosophy of life: for that we should go rather to his noble poem of *Ulysses*. But the song of the Lotos-Eaters gives perfect utterance to that mood of weariness into which we can all enter sympathetically, and for which poetry and music may sometimes helpfully find an outlet. It is the same mood which is expressed by Despair in Bk. I. Canto IX. xxxix.-xl., of the *Faerie Queene*.

St. 2, **the first of things**: the highest of created things. St. 5, **urn of brass**: the Homeric Greeks burned their dead. St. 6, **the island princes**: who ate the substance of Odysseus in Ithaca during his long absence, and wooed his wife Penelope. St. 8, **with an equal mind**: Lat. *aequo animo*, calmly and deliberately. **like gods**: the Epicurean view of the gods, adopted by Lucretius in his great poem, *De rerum natura*. Observe the sudden change from a slow languorous rhythm to swift impetuous movement in the middle of st. 8 ("Blight and famine . . .").

X. In strong contrast to the pessimism of the Lotos-Eaters rings the optimism of David's song (section 9 of Browning's fine dramatic lyric of *Saul*). The king's dark melancholy is charmed away by the strains of the youthful shepherd harper, reminding him of the joys of living and the greatness of his royal destiny.

XI. Sir Edmund Gosse calls this poem Emily Brontë's "most characteristic utterance", and says that the last two stanzas "contain in its quintessence the peculiar doctrine that it was her mission to preach". **the shadowy region**: the realm of abstract thoughts (cp. LI., by the same writer). **high morality**: lofty Stoical ideals. **The earth**: Nature to the responsive human heart can seem full of the intensest joy or pain. By a 'pathetic fallacy' we attribute our own feelings to external Nature; but in reality "the mind is its own place, and in itself can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven" (Satan in *Paradise Lost*, i. 254).

XII. The deeds of the past which the tree has witnessed are already forgotten, but the tree still flourishes and so inspires a feeling of eternity: the wind conveys the same idea of triumph over

time, for we know that the same wind will be blowing in future ages, and the poet's mind is fired to emulation. The thought in Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* is not unlike this. Cp. Cowper's *Yardley Oak*.

JOHN CLARE (1793–1864), the Northamptonshire peasant poet, inspired originally by the reading of Thomson's *Seasons*, obtained some recognition in his lifetime, and was for a while prosperous in a humble way, but sank into poverty, depression, and despair, and was for his last twenty years an inmate of Northampton Asylum.

XIII. The sonnet *Sibylla Palmifera* (VI.) was written to interpret a picture painted by Rossetti himself; this one is written on a painting by the Venetian Giorgione (1478–1510) in the Louvre. Rossetti was only twenty-one when he wrote this, one of the most beautiful of his sonnets and of all sonnets. That he did not attain this perfection without labour may be seen by comparing the opening lines of the sonnet as it originally appeared in *The Germ*, 1850:

> Water, for anguish of the solstice,—yea,
> Over the vessel's mouth still widening
> Listlessly dipt to let the water in
> With slow vague gurgle. Blue, and deep away
> The heat lies silent at the brink of day.

solstice: the summer solstice, midsummer. **the whole of pleasure**: pleasure is fully realised; there is nothing more to hope for; satiety has begun. **this**: the consciousness that joy is fleeting: do not let her thoughts pass to this: let the moment of perfection be perpetuated by art. See Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (G.T. 328) for a similar thought.

XIV. CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830–1894), sister of D. G. Rossetti, was, with the exception of Mrs.

Browning, the most considerable poetess of the nineteenth century, and far more perfect in her art, though she never reached the greatness of her contemporary's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

XV. No English lyric surpasses this in pure music. It is the opening song of Canto IV. of *The Princess*. " Written after hearing the echoes at Killarney in 1848. When I was there I heard a bugle blown beneath the ' Eagle's Nest ', and eight distinct echoes " (Tennyson's note).

XVI. It was a happy idea to set *The Forsaken Merman* and *The Lady of Shalott* side by side. For, unlike as they are, they have this in common : each is its author's greatest achievement in pictorial imagination and in the perfection of the musical accompaniment. Another point of likeness is the pathos of the half-human soul of the Merman and of the life among shadows from which the Lady of Shalott emerges, not so much into reality as into an exquisitely woven tapestry like her own " magic web with colours gay ". *Metre*.—Note the contrast between the slow spondaic movement of " The hoarse wind blows coldly " and the quick anapæstic movement of " Over banks of bright seaweed ".

XVII. The first of Tennyson's studies (originally published, 1833) in the Arthurian cycle of legends. He gave another version of the legend later in the story of " Elaine, the lily-maid of Astolat ", who dies of her love for Sir Lancelot. Pt. I., **Camelot**: King Arthur's legendary capital. **Willows whiten**: by showing the underside of the leaf. **unhail'd**: without being called to. Pt. II., **pad**: pony. Pt. III., **Galaxy**: the Milky Way. **bearded meteor**: shooting-star with trail of light behind. **"Tirra lirra"**: the light-hearted song of the lark in *Winter's Tale*, iv. 3. 9.

XVIII. Specially characteristic of Robert Browning's genius is the dramatic monologue, in which a story, a situation and a character find expression together. Some of his monologues are in blank-verse, others take the more concentrated form of a lyric. Among the most vivid are this and *Porphyria's Lover* (XXXIII.). The scene of the imaginary story is Paris under the Ancien Régime, *i.e.* seventeenth or eighteenth century. Rossetti (who also made a drawing to illustrate XVII.) took this poem for the subject of a water-colour. *Metre.*—The lines are made up of dactyls and trochees, with an optional extra syllable or two syllables at the beginning of the line. Browning's verse is not always the perfect vehicle for his thought, but here the swift movement magnificently conveys the feverish excitement of the speaker, exulting in the anticipation of revenge upon a successful rival.

XIX. *Amaturus*, Lat. fut. part. of *amo*, 'Ready to love'. WILLIAM CORY (1823–1892), an Eton master, whose thin volume of verse, *Ionica*, includes this poem and XCI. His portrait is sketched in Sir H. Newbolt's poem, *Ionicus*. These verses have some affinity to Coventry Patmore's *Angel in the House*, and to Praed, but also to the best Greek and Latin elegiac verse, of which he was an accomplished student. **by Muses moulded**: moulded by the Muse of Sculpture, who inspired Pheidias and the other artists of Hellas. **Hermes**: in ancient art carries a wand with a touch of which he can give or take away sleep and with which he conducts the souls of the dead to the lower regions.

XX. COVENTRY PATMORE (1823–1896) achieved his best as a poet in his Odes, which, without direct imitation, finely recall such seventeenth-century poets as Vaughan and Crashaw, and

showed the way to some of Francis Thompson's noblest utterances. **prævernal**: coming before the Spring. **sequester'd . . . defeat**: the over-refinement of Desire choosing deliberately to savour and yet abstain from the gratification which is within his power. **Avoids thee of**: releases thee from. **sharpness**: acridity, austerity. **with dead . . .**: Earth's heart is filled with aspirations after austerity, which will never take wing, but are like young birds that perish in the nest for lack of their parents.

XXI. An exquisite series of dream-pictures. Young Love's dream is always of perfection—perfect beauty, perfect music, perfect silence. Meanwhile the seasons—of human life as well as of the year—pass on their way, and the perfection is unrealised and unrealisable on earth: in ll. 37-40 there is a hint of a deeper fountain of beauty. **poppied death**: the poppy symbolises sleep and oblivion. *Metre.*—Whether the scheme sets the rhyming words so far apart that the effect is lost, is a question readers will settle for themselves; but any who take the trouble to become familiar with the poem will find the music growing upon them as they learn to expect the rhymes in the right place.

XXII. Ben Jonson might almost have written the first three lines, which in their triumphant rapture recall nothing so much as "See the chariot at hand here of Love" (O.B.V. 188); but he could hardly have attained the simple purity of the lines that follow.

XXIII. The first chorus in Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, perhaps the finest of all plays written in English in direct imitation of Greek drama. It is a celebration of Spring and the joys of Nature in the form of a hymn to Artemis, the Greek

huntress-goddess. **mother of months**: the first month of the year. **nightingale**: in Greek legend, Tereus, king of Thrace, married Procnē, daughter of Pandion, king of Athens. Procne lamented her separation from her sister Philomēla. Sent to Athens to bring Philomela, Tereus fell in love with her, and when she refused his advances, cut out her tongue and shut her up in a castle; but Procne learnt the truth, and in revenge the two sisters slew Tereus's son Itўlus, and offered his flesh to Tereus at a banquet. Tereus was changed by the gods into a hoopoe, Philomela into a nightingale, Procne into a swallow. **Mænad, Bassarid, Bacchanal**: all names for the women-votaries of Bacchus.

XXIV. Love, as the strongest of passions, stirring man's nature to its depths, produces both the greatest happiness and the greatest misery of which we are capable. *Metre.*—Six accents in each line; the general effect is trochaic, but in the penultimate couplet an extra unaccented syllable at the beginning turns the lines into the slower movement of six iambics. The close echo of the first line of each couplet in the second makes the opposition in thought more striking.

XXV. The true lover finds his Heaven in the Beloved: her speech is music of the heavenly choir, her eyes have the depth of the sky, her body is the sanctuary of her soul. But all Beauty passes: we triumph over this doom only by never losing the rapture of our first love and never forgetting the brevity of the joy vouchsafed to us. **the Seer**: Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772).

XXVI. The self-reproach of a lover, whose guilty consciousness of faithlessness to the old love mars his happiness in the new, has never been more finely expressed. ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY (1844–

1881) was a Londoner of Irish descent, who spent most of his life in the service of the British Museum ; his lyrics were greatly admired by F. T. Palgrave.

XXVII. With this character of a modern Englishwoman we may compare Wordsworth's portrait of his wife (" She was a phantom of delight ", G.T. 217) and Stevenson's " My Wife ". In Meredith's verses the inner rhymes give an additional swiftness, as of ardent conviction.

XXVIII. There would be little use in trying to find a philosophy of life hidden in this song. It is a deftly woven pattern of words and sounds, in which the lover expresses his delight in loving and his delight in singing :

> The fairy fancies range,
> And, lightly stirr'd,
> Ring little bells of change
> From word to word. (CXVI.)

XXIX. The lover would fain lose his separate individuality, become wholly absorbed in the beloved, but the finite bounds of our nature cannot be so transcended—we remain separate, the yearning is unfulfilled (cp. Arnold in XLIX.). The lesson seems to be conveyed in the scenery of the Campagna, the Italian plain to the south of Rome—the life of flowers and insects, so full of heat and energy, yet so brief, and the ruins that speak at once of eternity and of the brevity of the human generations.

XXX.-XXXII. Three numbers from the sonnet-sequence which Elizabeth Barrett wrote to her lover Robert Browning. They were not published, nor even shown to him, till after their marriage. Their modest title, *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850) was chosen to disguise their

intensely personal nature. The 44 sonnets are Mrs. Browning's highest achievement in poetry.

XXXIII. Porphyria's lover, driven mad by jealousy, has murdered her ; and with the openness which is as characteristic of madness in some phases, as secrecy is in others, he sets forth the story of the crime, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Rhyming stanzas of five octosyllabic lines, *ababb* : there is not always a pause at the end of a stanza.

XXXIV. " From *The Triumph of Time*, the first forty stanzas of the poem being omitted. L. 1 : the singer is the French troubadour Rudel, who fell in love with the Countess of Tripoli from the report of her ; sailed to Syria, fell sick on the way, and saw his lady but to die in her arms " (B.). St. 1, **midland sea** : Mediterranean. St. 7, **heft** : pressure ; Love heals the wound, but it is Love that inflicts it also. *Metre.*—Four accents in each line. We may treat the lines as made up of iambs (∪ −) and anapæsts (∪ ∪ −), but it is better to regard them as trochees (− ∪) and dactyls (− ∪ ∪) with an extra-metrical unaccented syllable, or even two syllables, allowed occasionally at the beginning of the line.

XXXV. By the side of the lament of the lover for the bliss wholly denied him (XXXIV.), the anthologist has set the weary agony of the forsaken girl in the lonely house. In word-magic and word-music Swinburne's poem is the finer of the two. " He is a reed ", said Tennyson of him, " through which all things blow to music." But in sympathetic intensity (the poet entering into the feelings of his heroine) and in the marvellous pictorial power with which the house and its surroundings are imagined Tennyson's poem soars

far beyond Swinburne's reach. In three lines of st. 6 (" Old faces glimmered through the doors ", etc.) the eeriest effects of modern poetry are anticipated (cp. CLIII., *The Listeners*, by W. de la Mare). The subject came to Tennyson from the merest hint in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*— " There, at the moated grange, resides this dejected Mariana ".

XXXVI. This moving elegy is in the metre since made familiar by Frederic Myers's *St. Paul*. The lines may be regarded either as (1) five ordinary iambic feet, with an extra syllable at the end of the first and third lines and a trochee generally substituted for an iambus in the first foot, or as (2) an opening dactyl followed by four trochees, the last trochee being catalectic in the second and fourth lines. In the last stanza " memory's rapturous pain " recalls Dante's

> Nessun maggior dolore
> Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
> Nella miseria
>
> (*Inferno*, v. 121-3)

and Keats's " In a drear-nighted December " (G.T. 235).

XXXVII. Rose Aylmer was a real person, the youngest daughter of Henry, fourth Baron Aylmer. Landor wrote this, perhaps the most perfectly classical elegy in the English language in its union of deep tenderness with delicate reserve, on hearing of her death in India in 1800.

XXXVIII.-XLI. The four finest of a series of 16-line poems (very like sonnets in character, and in fact called sonnets by so accomplished a metrist as Swinburne) in which Meredith tells the story of the decay of love between a married pair. In the

first three the husband is the speaker. XXXVIII. recalls in bitterness an hour when it seemed impossible that Love should die; in XXXIX. Love has died, and the kisses that pass are therefore 'unblest'; in XL. there is a reconciliation and an attempt to start life afresh; but in XLI.—in which the poet speaks, not the husband—we are told that both long in vain for the old assurance ("the buried day") ; doubt has entered their hearts and can only end in misery: the movement of the passions is as mysterious and inevitable as the ebb and flow of the tide which expends terrific energy, merely "to throw that faint thin line upon the shore".

XLII. A girl reveals to a man that she has given her heart to him, only to discover that he does not value the gift. So her heart is broken, but, instead of despairing, she gives the broken heart to God that He may refine and purge it. *Metre.*—A wonderfully pathetic lilt. There are three accents in lines 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, two in lines 2, 4, 6 of each stanza; the feet are anapæsts and iambs.

XLIII. The situation is the same as in the preceding, except that it is the man who is dismissed. He asks the favour of a last ride together, and during the ride gives himself up, not to despair, but to consoling thoughts. St. 9, **sublimate**: etherealise. With 'The instant made eternity' of st. 10 cp. the last line of XIII.

XLIV. *Metre.*—Three accents in each line, except the last of each stanza, which has only two.

XLV.-XLVI. Meredith's saying that what he mainly sought in poetry was "concentration and suggestion" is finely illustrated by these two little poems of Browning.

In the second, returning daylight reveals the world ; the sun begins his golden path across the sky, the man turns to the work which is laid upon him as a human being.

XLVII. AUSTIN DOBSON (1840–1921) was a writer of admirable prose and of a peculiarly delicate and distinguished verse, which to classical readers sometimes recalls Horace. He is represented in this selection by two poems of friendship, this and CI. **Thamis**: ' Tămĕsis ' was Caesar's name for the Thames, but ' Thamis ' is found in mediæval Latin. *Metre.*—An imitation of the French Rondeau : the changes are rung on two rhymes throughout, and the opening words recur twice as a refrain.

XLVIII. Doubtless the scenery of the Roman Campagna, with its ruined towers and aqueducts, suggested the poem (cp. XXIX.) ; but the ancient city is purely imaginary. *Metre.*—Six trochees, the last catalectic, followed by two trochees, the last catalectic. In l. 79 the first " Oh ! " is a monosyllabic foot : it should be dwelt on as long as the trochee for which it is substituted.

XLIX. Cp. and contrast CLXXIX., *The Visiting Sea.* The three epithets in the last line make a wonderful climax. Between two comparatively unusual words comes the commonplace monosyllable ' salt ', but how strangely full of meaning, weight, inevitability it is ! We may think of Kingsley's ' cruel crawling foam ' and ' cruel hungry foam ' (LXXVIII.), but ' salt ' is more pregnant with meaning.

L. This poem on Sappho is metrically a *tour de force*, written in the classical metre, " Sapphics ", associated with the exquisite Greek lyric poetess

whose work has come down to us only in fragments. The scansion is

$$-\smile\,|\,--\,|\,-\smile\smile\,|\,-\smile\,|\,-\overline{\smile}\ (3\text{ times})$$
$$-\smile\smile\,|\,-\overline{\smile}$$

The most famous specimen in English is Canning's parody, " The Needy Knife-grinder ", but of serious examples this of Swinburne is the finest.

Swinburne follows the legend that Sappho rejected the love of men because of her devotion to her girl-friends. He imagines the wrath of Aphrodītē, the goddess of the love between man and woman. St. 1. Cp. Milton, *Il Penseroso*, " the dewy-feathered Sleep ", *i.e.* Sleep scattering dew from his wings. St. 4, **Lesbos**: the island in the Greek Archipelago where Sappho lived; Mitylēnē was its chief town. St. 8, **the tenth** (Muse): a name given to Sappho in antiquity. St. 18, **fruitless**: chilldess.

LI. The mystic regards the life of the body as a prison, just as Plato (*Republic*, vi.) had described men who confine themselves to the impressions of the senses under the image of prisoners in a fire-lit cave watching the shadows on the wall. From the ' chain ' that binds the ' flesh ' Emily Brontë finds escape into a rapt vision of the Unseen —an intense bliss while it lasts, though the return to earth is correspondingly painful. This is not a religious poem in the ordinary sense, yet it recalls the Apostle's " desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better " (*Philippians* i. 23). St. 3, **nothing known in my maturer years**: implies the teaching of Wordsworth and Vaughan, that childhood is nearer to the divine vision. " Some stanzas describing the visit to the Prisoner are omitted " (B.).

LII. T. E. BROWN (1830–1897), for many years

a master at Clifton College, wrote several narrative poems of great merit in the Manx dialect and many fine lyrics. A selection of his poems is in the *Golden Treasury Series*. Best known of all is this little garden-piece, a poetic version of Bacon's immortal "God Almighty first planted a garden, and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures". There is also allusion to *Genesis* iii. 8 and *Psalm* xiv. 1.

LIII. Notice the effect of the transition from the rapid trochees and anapæsts in the first stanza to the slow iambics of its last line and the first line of the second stanza.

LIV. Tennyson wrote this noble ballad after Froude's essay on "England's Forgotten Worthies" had recalled attention to Sir Walter Raleigh's *Report of the truth of the fight about the Iles of Acores this last Sommer*, 1591. L. 1, **Flores**: a disyllable. **Azores**: a trisyllable.

LV. J. CLARENCE MANGAN (1803–1849) was an Irishman, who, in the impression he leaves of poetical powers marred by intemperance, recalls E. A. Poe. **Rosaleen**: a personification of Ireland; cp. W. B. Yeats's Kathleen-na-Houlihan. **Erne**: a river that flows through two large loughs of that name into Donegal Bay.

LVI. **azure world**: blue air. **wrinkled . . . crawls**: the picture is of a calm, slowly moving sea seen from a great height.

LVII. Delicious in its instinctive sympathy with the timid creatures of the woodland. Cp. CCXXIII., by Arthur Symons. **Nimbles**: as a verb, a dialect form. **Cheat**: past. part., dialect. **still**: always.

LVIII. The first EARL OF LYTTON (1831–1891), son of the novelist, Bulwer Lytton, had a diplomatic

career and was Viceroy of India. He published poems under the pseudonym of ' Owen Meredith '. This poem points something of the same contrast between Man and Nature which Wordsworth pointed in his *Lines written in early Spring* (G.T. 319), but without Wordsworth's conviction that Man can find happiness by putting himself in harmony with " Nature's holy plan ". St. 7, **Hast**: ' hath ' in the original text (B.). St. 11, **assails**: tries to win by violence. St. 12, **the Fiend**: *Revelation* xii. 7 —" There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ".

LIX. " This song came to me on the yellowing autumn-tide at Tintern Abbey, full for me of its bygone memories. It is the sense of the abiding in the transient " (Tennyson's note). Tennyson liked to think how few readers noticed the absence of rhymes from this exquisitely musical lyric. It is certainly remarkable how little rhyme is missed both here and in Collins's *Ode to Evening* (G.T. 186).

LX. Three stanzas from the first version (1859) of EDWARD FITZGERALD'S free translation of the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám, the Persian poet. In later versions, *and he lies fast asleep* was altered into " but cannot break his sleep "; *its Lap* into " her lap "; *delightful Herb* into " reviving Herb ". **The Courts**: Persepolis. **Jamshyd, Bahrám**: Jamshyd was a king of Persia in legendary times, Bahrám one of the kings of the Sassanian dynasty, 5th cent. A.D.; but the very strangeness of their names points the moral.

LXI.-LXXI. A group of eleven elegies, followed by three poems of grief (LXXII.-LXXIV.). In LXI. the dead is thought of as lying asleep in a land of shadows, waiting for the resurrection.

LXII. In memory of a cousin, James Silverthorne, to whom Browning was much attached: the wood is said to be Dulwich wood, and the flower the spotted Persicaria. A strikingly close parallel is the epitaph of W. Browne on his first wife, *In Obitum M. S., May 10, 1614*:

> May! be thou never graced with birds that sing,
> Nor Flora's pride!
> In thee all flowers and roses spring,
> Mine only died.

LXIII. "This poem first saw the light along with the dawn in a Lincolnshire lane at 5 o'clock in the morning" (Tennyson's note); but the imagined scene seems to be Clevedon, a little watering-place on the Bristol Channel, where Arthur Hallam, the poet's friend, lies buried. *Metre.*—The length of the lines is determined by the number of accents. The three syllables of the first line are three monosyllabic feet which occupy as much time in reading as any lines except the 11th and 15th. These two lines have a fourth accent, and give a further effect of lingering sadness because the ear is not expecting the addition.

LXIV. Like XX. and LXXXIII., an irregular ode in which the rhymes are intricately interwoven and long and short lines alternated with subtle art. In this ode the opening phrase recurs in the middle and at the end after the pattern of a French Rondeau (see note on XLVII.).

LXV. The loveliest of all Victorian elegies. The language is of the simplest, but in the last stanza three Shakespearian words, 'cabin'd', 'inherit', 'vasty', add a touch of rarity and distinction without destroying the simplicity.

LXVI. Section xi. of Tennyson's noble elegy,

In Memoriam, written to commemorate his friend Arthur Hallam (1811 – 1833). Its characteristic beauty as a *pastoral* elegy—a feature of so many great elegies from Callimachus and Virgil to Milton, Shelley, and Arnold—is illustrated in these stanzas, which frame a series of exquisitely finished pictures of woods, wold, plain, and silver sea, as seen on an autumn morning. St. 2, **wold** : the Lincolnshire wold. **gossamers** : cobwebs with the dew shining on them. St. 3, **the bounding main** : the sea on the horizon, the North Sea ; but the sight of that sea carries the poet's thoughts to the Mediterranean, over which Hallam's body is being conveyed.

LXVII. The bereaved lover, gazing at the portrait of his beloved, recalls the day when he painted it and the background he chose for the picture. Now the beloved is " made one with Nature ", and the lover thinks how his soul, released from the bonds of the body, may be reunited with her soul in the silence pervaded by God. In that day his soul's pilgrimage will be accomplished, " the spirit's Palestine " reached, and he will gaze into her eyes and find a deeper tenderness in them. The poem will be best understood by reading *The Blessed Damozel* (XC.) in close conjunction with it. One of the most astonishing things about both poems is the early age at which they were written : Rossetti was a mere boy when he composed the first drafts, so that they must be understood as imaginative, not autobiographical : both conceptions were embodied in pictures as well as in verse. The poetry, no less than the painting, is highly individual, though A. C. Benson has remarked on the Tennysonian influence in st. 6. The supernatural is powerfully, yet restrainedly, introduced in st. 3. St. 10, **iron-bosomed** : shining

with the cruel hardness and coldness of iron. St. 11, **the music of the suns**: the spheres making music by their movement.

LXVIII.-LXIX. No Oxford poems have caught, or handed on, so much of the *genius loci*—the colleges, the studies, sports, festivities, the river, the flowers and peasant-folk and place-names of the surrounding country. And nowhere has Arnold revealed more movingly his characteristic melancholy, which contrasts both with Browning's optimistic outlook on this life and Tennyson's resolve to trust in life beyond the grave. "Sick hurry" and "divided aims" Arnold diagnoses as the disease of modern society, and he finds no cure for it, only "anodynes"; but his thoughts turn longingly to the life of simpler days, and it is in Nature that, like Wordsworth, he discovers the light still shining. The second poem commemorates his friend Clough, in whom he finds some likeness to the Scholar-Gipsy, though his life had been saddened by the religious doubts and controversies of the Victorian age. *Metre.*—Stanzas of 10 iambic lines, very like those of Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, though the short line comes at a different place in the stanza.

LXVIII., st. 4, **Glanvil's book**: *The Vanity of Dogmatizing*, 1661, where Arnold found the story. St. 6, **the Hurst**: a wooded eminence. St. 7, **green muffled**: thickly clad in green. St. 15, **the just-pausing Genius**: the Romans thought of the Genius as a guardian-angel who watched over a man through his life and died with him or went away at his death. St. 17, **term or scope**: limit or aim. St. 19, Arnold may have had in mind those of whom he wrote in his poems and in *Essays in Criticism*—Heine, Senancour (author of *Obermann*), Maurice de Guérin. St. 21, **Dido**:

Virgil, *Æn.* vi. 469. St. 24, **Chian**: from the island of Chios in the Ægean Sea. St. 25, **Midland waters**: Mediterranean. **Syrtes**: quicksands off the North African coast. **western straits**: Straits of Gibraltar.

LXIX. Thyrsis, Cŏrydon, Daphnis are all names of shepherds in the *Idylls* of Theocritus, and afterwards in the *Eclogues* of Virgil. St. 9, In Virgil, *Ecl.* vii., there is a singing-match between Corydon and Thyrsis. **Bion**: a contemporary and imitator of Theocritus. The "good survivor" was Moschus, whose elegy on Bion is recalled in Arnold's lines about Proserpine. St. 10, **Dorian shepherds**: Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus belonged to Dorian colonies in Sicily and wrote in Doric Greek. **Enna**: a town in the centre of Sicily; from the plain near it legend said that Proserpine had been carried off by Pluto. St. 17, **Arno-vale**: Clough had died in Florence. St. 18, **boon**: benign. **the great Mother**: Magna Mater, the Nature goddess, identified with the Phrygian Cybēlē. St. 19, "Daphnis, the ideal Sicilian shepherd of Greek pastoral poetry, was said to have followed into Phrygia his mistress Piplea, who had been carried off by robbers, and to have found her in the power of the king of Phrygia, Lityerses. Lityerses used to make strangers try a contest with him in reaping corn, and to put them to death if he overcame them. Hercules arrived in time to save Daphnis, took upon himself the reaping-contest with Lityerses, overcame him, and slew him. The Lityerses-song connected with this tradition was, like the Linus-song, one of the early plaintive strains of Greek popular poetry, and used to be sung by corn-reapers. Other traditions represented Daphnis as beloved by a nymph who exacted from him an

oath to love no one else. He fell in love with a princess, and was struck blind by the jealous nymph. Mercury, who was his father, raised him to heaven, and made a fountain spring up in the place from which he ascended " (Arnold's note). **all the marvel**: Virgil, *Ecl.* v. 56-57.

LXX. Tennyson's tribute to Catullus, written after a visit in 1880 to Sirmione, the peninsula on the Lago di Garda where ruins, traditionally supposed to be of Catullus's old country-house, still stand. The peninsula is covered with olives. The ' purple flower ' is a very beautiful iris. *O venusta Sirmio* (" O lovely Sirmio ") is from Catullus, xxxi., and *Ave atque Vale* (" Hail and Farewell ") from ci., his lament for his brotner. Catullus (xxxi.) calls the waters of the Garda Lake ' Lydian ' because the Rhætian Gauls of the district were said to be of Lydian origin, and he bids the waves welcome him with all laughter.

" Of the two currents of emotion which gave birth to the poem, the first is the actual beauty of the moment—the flat lake, the encircling mountains and the Italian boatmen, singing, doubtless, to their oars—and the second is the plangent recollection of Catullus—of how, so many years ago, he had looked upon this little jutting strip of olives as his own, how he had come so gaily back to it from Bithynia, and how he had lost the brother whom he loved. There are therefore two musical *motifs*—the *motif* of the rowers, represented by the vowel *o* and the *motif* of Catullus, represented by the broad Roman *a*. The music is set to 8 rhythmic beats, as is general in all such water songs from the Volga to the Elbe, and in the first line, as well as in the first two beats of the second, the rowing *motif* predominates. With the broader vowel of ' landed ', however, it ceases to obtrude—becomes

indeed an undertone to what follows" (Harold Nicolson, *Tennyson*, ch. x.).

LXXI. Written for the nineteenth centenary of Virgil's death: "at once the finest and amplest account ever given of the profound and majestic quality of the *Æneid*, the fullest acknowledgement of his own life-long devotion to Virgil, and the nearest approach made by any modern poet to the splendour of the Virgilian verse" (J. W. Mackail, *Virgil and His Meaning to the World of To-day*). The long lines, with the 'cæsura' or break in the middle, give an English reader a truer idea of the majesty of the Virgilian hexameter than can be got from any direct imitation of that metre in English.

St. 1 describes the *Æneid*. St. 2 refers to Hesiod, the early Greek poet whose "Works and Days" suggested the *Georgics*. St. 3 describes the *Georgics*; sts. 4 and 5 the *Eclogues*. Sts. 6 and 7 concentrate on the greatest Book of the *Æneid*, Book VI Æneas, by direction of the Sibyl, looks for a "golden branch" in the dark forest to point the way to the lower world when he goes down to consult Anchises. In Hades he sees the phantom procession of souls rising to the upper world. So Tennyson speaks of our world as "this phantom shore", because the generations are as shadows that pass, but Virgil's poetry abides. St. 8, **Forum**: see *Georgics*, ii. 502, "insanumque forum". St. 9, **Rome of freemen**: Victor Emmanuel freed Rome from the temporal power of the Papacy, 1870. **sunder'd once**: "Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos," *Eclogue*, i. 67. St. 10, **Mantovano**: Mantuan. In Dante, *Purg.* vi. 74, Sordello salutes Virgil, who was born near Mantua, by this name.

LXXII. The details of the cheerless scene stand out with the distinctness of a Pre-Raphaelite

picture; the bareness of the diction and the staccato rhythm contribute to the impression of unrelieved misery. It is a well-known psychological fact that the memory often retains a vivid imprint of the surroundings, hardly noticed at the time, of a deeply-moving experience.

LXXIII. A portrayal of the paralysing effect of despair. Aubrey de Vere's noble sonnet, " Count each affliction, whether grave or light ", with its ideal of a grief " majestic, equable, sedate ", would make a fine contrasting picture. *Metre.*—In the structure of this sonnet (as in XXXI. and XXXII.) Mrs. Browning follows the example of Milton, who, whilst adopting the Italian arrangement of rhymes, did not observe the rule sometimes arbitrarily laid down by modern critics that there should be a complete break between the octave (first eight lines) and the sestet (last six).

LXXIV. The poet in his despair finds the Universe empty of consolation. He is bitterly aware that others—the Hebrew Psalmist, or Richter in his *Dream of the Universe*, or Arnold in such poems as *Self-Dependence* and *A Summer Night*—have read other lessons in the stars, but he thinks these lessons " a grand illusion ".

The stanzas form section xvii. of *The City of Dreadful Night*, the poem by which JAMES THOMSON (1834–1882), namesake of an earlier English poet, is chiefly remembered. He was a man of real genius but most unhappy life, and " The City of Night " is his name for the despair in which he came habitually to dwell. L. 1, **the endless nights**: Thomson thought the alleged swiftness of Time a strange human delusion: to him " The pitiless hours like years and ages creep ".

LXXV. A man lies dying in a room bare except for a bed, a table with medicine bottles, and a

blue curtain. A clergyman tries to lead the dying man's thoughts to religion, but they wander back to an experience when at least he was lifted for the time out of himself in the happiness of being loved.

LXXVI. If it is, as Wordsworth held, part of the poet's mission to sing " Of joy in widest commonalty spread ", Clare's poem is precious for its sympathetic picture of happiness realisable in the humblest home. St. 1, **roundy**: dialect word, meaning ' large and round ' ; it is specially applied to lumps of coal. St. 8, **faggot**: bundle of brushwood used for fuel.

LXXVII. A very musical poem, though rhymeless except for the fact that an internal rhyme (dried, ride, etc.) is introduced into the last line of each stanza. The absence of rhyme-endings is partly made up in this way and partly by the pervading alliteration. The " light voot-vall ", indicating the farmer's homage to his wife's superior refinement, is a delicate touch, and his sense of her continued presence is a proof that his view of life is not wholly material. For another picture of a farmer moving house (with a less poetical ghost), see Tennyson's *Walking to the Mail*.

WILLIAM BARNES (1801–1886) spent most of his life in the county of Dorset ; he was a schoolmaster and afterwards a clergyman. Most of his poems were written in the Dorset dialect, and some are of very fine quality. Dialect forms : Woak, oak ; doust, dust ; jaÿ, joy ; to ho vor, in anxious care for ; house-ridden, moving house ; lippèns, movements of the lips ; to light, to vacancy.

LXXVIII. This and *Three Fishers*, Charles Kingsley's two most famous songs, give poignant expression to the pathetic side of life on the seacoast. He had felt in his boyhood at Clovelly

and Helston the terror as well as the strong attraction of the sea. In *Modern Painters* (Pt. IV., ch. xii.) Ruskin quotes the epithets here applied to the foam as an example of the ' pathetic fallacy ' by which we attribute human passions to Nature.

LXXIX. Few have loved their home and its surroundings so intensely as Haworth Parsonage and the moorland near it were loved by Emily Brontë. Those who have visited Haworth will appreciate the truth and poetry of the unadorned description. See Arnold's poem, *Haworth Churchyard*.

LXXX. DIGBY MACKWORTH DOLBEN " was only nineteen when he was drowned while bathing in the river Welland. His poems were first published by Mr. Robert Bridges, his school-friend at Eton, in 1911 " (B.).

LXXX.-LXXXIII. The relationship between parent and child is the link between these poems. First (LXXX.) comes a boy's beautiful expression of his sacred feeling for his mother—a feeling intensely personal, yet shared by " all the human-hearted ". Then (LXXXI.) William Morris's wonderful realisation of a mother's feelings, her communings with her own heart taking shape in an address to her first-born. There are intimate things which she will never say to her child when his separate consciousness has developed, but she hopes that, if she says them now, some dim, yet helpful, remembrance of them may be his. So she tells of the dawn of love—like Desdemona, she loved her husband for the dangers he had passed—the hopes and fears and shyness of courtship, the purity of wedded love, the sorrow of conception, the pains of birth. She contrasts the ideal love, and the children that are its fruit, with the loveless marriages of convention or of worldly interest,

as well as with the lawless matings that lead to shame and despair. Lastly, her heart goes out into a dream of the fair future she would fain forecast for her child. LXXXII. is a young mother's heart-broken lament over the faithlessness of her lover. LXXXIII. is a father's realisation of the need for infinite patience with childhood, passing into a parable of the Divine Love for mankind: so turned, it becomes an expansion of the Psalmist's simile, "Like as a father pitieth his children" (*Ps.* ciii. 13). *Metre of* LXXXI.—Lines of 6 accents with a break in the middle; each line is printed as two; the feet are iambs or anapæsts.

LXXXV. The poet complains that dreams have no revelation. In the insensibility of sleep the uncontrolled soul either skips into "vacancy of folly", or sees gaudy but meaningless visions, or repeats the round of trivial every-day sensations. If there were a really deep suspending of bodily sensations, the soul might fly to God. In this and other poems T. E. Brown discloses an affinity to the seventeenth-century mystics. **the chartered space**: the region through which the soul is given freedom to roam.

LXXXVI. The tragedy of the "lost days" of life is that they are not lost: they have made us irrevocably what we are. Another sonnet of Rossetti finds even more terrible expression for Remorse ("Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been").

LXXXVII. As lovers of Tennyson like to end upon *Crossing the Bar*, or lovers of Browning upon the *Epilogue to Asolando*, so those who cherish Clough's memory recognise in this poem, though it was not chronologically latest, his final testament to the world. "Truth hath a quiet breast", and there is more sustaining power in these modest stanzas

than in a hundred lyrics of self-satisfied and gushing optimism.

LXXXVIII. " From *Obermann Once More*. This vision of the Roman and the Eastern world after the coming of Christ is put into the mouth of ' Obermann ', Arnold's name for E. F. de Senancour (1770–1846), author of a book of that name " (B.). The conflict between the old Pagan view of life and Christianity, here described, may be illustrated from the *Confessions of St. Augustine*. St. 1, **Appian way** : the highroad leading S. from Rome to Capua and Brundisium, the finest and most famous of ancient roads. St. 11, **a place of ruin** : Rome and Italy after the fall of the Empire in the West (A.D. 476).

LXXXIX.-XC. Two poems of Heaven as pictured by modern poets whose imagination has been kindled, partly by the Book of Revelation, partly by mediæval poets and painters. Both poems seek to reproduce the naïveté of the Ages of Faith : such a reproduction is necessarily artificial and imperfect in days when the symbolism of Revelation is no longer mistaken for literal fact, but it may be beautiful in the same way as the conventional design of a tapestry. Only, whereas LXXXIX. is a boy's religious poem in the mediæval spirit, XC. (a boy's poem likewise) is highly modern in imagining the Blessed Damozel pining in Heaven for her earthly lover. Dante, on the contrary, heard from the beatified spirits that " His will is our peace " (*Paradiso*, iii.), and Beatrice smiled in pleasure when he concentrated his thought upon God so completely as to forget her (*Paradiso*, x.).

LXXXIX. St. 1, **pearl** : *Rev.* xxi. 21, " And the twelve gates were twelve pearls ; every several gate was of one pearl ". **sea of jasper** : *Rev.* iv. 6. St. 3, **withouten** : archaic for ' without '. **of cost** :

costly. **Candlemas**: Feast of Purification of the Virgin. St. 4, **Laudate Psalm**: Psalm of Praise. **feet**: *Isaiah* lii. 7, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that . . . publisheth peace". **Goddes Land**: Holy Land. St. 5, **Star-tired**: attired, decked with stars; cp. *Rev.* xii. 1, "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars", and Milton *On Time*, "Attired with stars, we shall for ever sit". **Cecily**, etc.: St. Cecilia, St. Dorothea, Mary Magdalene; one or other of them is often found in mediæval pictures of the Virgin. St. 6, **the Temple**: *Rev.* xxi. 22, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it". **cries and tears**: cp. *Rev.* vi. 9-10. St. 7, **purple hair**: empurpled with blood from the crown of thorns. St. 8, **Sathanas**: Greek and Latin form of 'Satan'.

XC. Rossetti painted two pictures of "The Blessed Damozel" after writing the poem, and Debussy composed a cantata on the theme. St. 7, **like thin flames**: cp. Dante, *Paradiso*, xxiii. 124. St. 15, **mystic tree**: *Rev.* ii. 7, "the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God". St. 18. The choice of handmaidens may be partly the poet's own, with his instinct for beautiful names. The same instinct is seen in his revival of old names of musical instruments in st. 21. "The idea of the Virgin and her handmaidens weaving and embroidering garments suggests Flemish origin, or the mediæval châteaux of northern France" (Mrs. Glazebrook). St. 23, **the light**: see *Paradiso* passim and especially Canto xxx.

XCI. After the two visions of Heaven the anthologist has set the wistful elegiacs of a modern sceptic who cannot be consoled for the brevity of

earthly life. Mimnermus, whose name the sceptic takes, was a Greek elegiac poet who compared mankind to the short-lived leaves. St. 3, **sexless**: cp. *Mark* xii. 25.

XCII. Emily Brontë here puts the philosophy of her own life—" so impatient of constraint from others, so implacable in its slavery to its own principles " (E. Gosse)—into the mouth of an ancient Stoic.

XCIII. Characteristic of the most classical of modern English poets in its severe simplicity, dignity, and clearly outlined imagery.

XCIV. Like XCIII. and CI., a poem of Friendship. Clough wrote it after his estrangement from W. G. Ward, his great friend of undergraduate days at Balliol. The inner rhymes, used in the last three stanzas only, with their quickening effect upon the metre, mark the change from calm to rapid motion.

XCVI. One of the poems of the months prefixed by William Morris to the stories in his *Earthly Paradise*.

XCVII. One of the sonnets in the *House of Life*. Rossetti is said to have written it from a feeling that through his two ambitions of poet and painter he was failing in both careers. If that is so, the tragic tone will not seem strange to those who realise the intensity of an artist's passion for his art. **Love's and Death's deceit**: the cheating of their hopes by Love and Death. **separate hopes**: conflicting ambitions.

XCVIII. Paracelsus, in Browning's dramatic poem, imagines himself making a pyre of fragrant spices on which his old artistic dreams are to be consumed : " thus they pass in song ".

XCIX. The contrast of past life makes the consciousness of present silence more profoundly moving. Cp. LX. and Shelley's *Ozymandias* (G.T. 293).

C. The sceptical poet, denying the survival of the separate personality after death, yet affirms his belief in a kind of immortality : the immortality of the thoughts to which we have given expression, and of the temperaments transmitted by heredity. " One of seven sonnets by the author of *Erewhon*, privately printed with *A Psalm of Montreal* in 1904 " (B.).

CII. L. 5, **Memnon** : a colossal statue near the Egyptian Thebes, which gave forth a musical sound when first struck by the sun's rays ; the sound was explained as Memnon's greeting to his mother, the goddess of Dawn.

CIII. For the tranquillising effect of the sea on man's meditations we may compare several of Matthew Arnold's poems, *Self-Dependence*, *A Summer Night*, *The Future* : contrast the influence of the sea in his *Dover Beach*. The lesson that Patmore draws is like Milton's " God doth not need either man's work or His own gifts ". L. 4, **purposeless** : the continual ebb and flow seems to betoken absence of purpose ; cp. XLI.

CIV. A wonderful triumph of concentration is this epilogue to *Paradise Lost* compressed, yet without obscurity, into the narrow compass of a sonnet. L. 7, **careened** : nautical metaphor, ' heeled over '. L. 12, **the brain of heaven** : the starry spheres (whose music symbolises order) are regarded as the thought of God projected into space.

CV. Section cxxiii. of *In Memoriam*. The thought of the transitoriness of even the most permanent things in Nature recurs in Tennyson's

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington (" the Giant Ages heave the hill and break the shore . . ."), and parallels have been pointed out in *Job* xiv. 11, 18, 19, and Shakespeare, 2 *Henry IV.*, III. i. 45. L. 9, **my spirit**: with its assurance of permanence

CVI. Composed on Newman's voyage homewards across the Mediterranean in 1833, this famous hymn has been called " one of the birth-pangs of the Oxford Movement ". St. 3, **those angel faces**: either the faces of those whom he had known and loved on earth, or faces seen in Heaven in pre-natal days. Newman may have shared the creed of Henry Vaughan (G.T. 98) and of Wordsworth in his *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*; the *Apologia pro vita sua* testifies to a strong belief in angels. Questioned in old age about his precise meaning, Newman refused to commit himself.

CVII. The title, Clough's own, is from *James* i. 17.

CVIII. An early poem of Tennyson: the scene is the garden of his father's rectory at Somersby, Lincolnshire. The sadder aspect of autumn, the sense of decay, the damp, musty smell, is wonderfully represented. *Metre.*—Iambic and anapæstic in the song, dactylic and trochaic in the chorus or refrain.

CIX. Age brings decay to man, warns him of the ending " earth to earth ", demonstrates his share in the inarticulate cry of a creation " groaning and travailing in pain ". Yet can he resolve to keep to the end the " flower of soul " that separates him from all else in Nature. This resigned courage may be contrasted with the robuster optimism of Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra, insistent that " The best is yet to be ". L. 5, **waif-wrinkled**: furrowed by the action of drifting weeds or other objects cast up by the tide.

CX. The prelude to *Songs before Sunrise*, a lyrical outburst in praise of liberty, inspired by Swinburne's enthusiasm for the Italian Revolution: the first nine stanzas of the original are omitted. Synopsis: The poet has been among the votaries of Pleasure and Passion, but the power of these passes away (st. 1-4); yet time and change, which can defeat these and even control man's life, cannot defeat the spirit of man (st. 5-7). The light of man's soul is kindled by contact and co-operation with other souls, and each of us is given the alternative of setting his short life in tune with the best or worst of past generations and filling it with acts that help or hinder the progress of mankind (st. 8-10). Pioneers of thought have vision, as from a hill-top, of the sunrise on the sea of freedom (st. 11). The whole is a marvellous piece of music, with an exquisite close. St. 1, 2, **Mænads, Thyiades, Bassarid**: votaries of Bacchus. St. 3, **Cotys**: Cotytto, a Thracian goddess, worshipped with wild rites. **Edonian**: Thracian. St. 4, **rejected**: flung back.

CXI. Written by Landor for his seventy-fifth birthday. Very characteristic of him in its high Roman spirit, somewhat too arrogant, yet finely touched to fine issues, and in its classical perfection of form.

CXII. There is something of Herrick's *Daffodils* (G.T. 140) in this song, but something also of the later generation that produced Hardy's *Woodlanders* and his *Return of the Native* in a more intimate sympathy with forest and heath, the ancient and gigantic powers of Nature. The slow iambics of the first line of st. 2 mark the quiet dropping of the pine-cones, while the anapæsts that follow catch the swiftness of the wind overhead.

CXIII. A farewell to the brook near the home of the poet's boyhood at Somersby.

CXIV. The third of three sonnets which give different answers with which man may meet the announcement, " To-morrow thou shalt die ". " Eat thou and drink ", " Watch thou and fear ", are the first two answers ; but the poet's sympathies are with the third. It is not for men to rest as if the race had attained perfection ; on the contrary, our thought and action are needed, because mankind still has endless space to traverse before the goal is reached.

CXV. Emily Brontë's faith is in one eternal Deity pervading the Universe and inhabiting her own breast : Death, therefore, is non-existent. The verses were found on her desk after her death by her sister Charlotte.

> Whose too bold dying song
> Stirr'd, like a clarion blast, my soul—
> (Arnold, *Haworth Churchyard.*)

Another ' last poem ' is F. Thompson's, CCXL.

CXVI. The book ends on the note with which it began—the never-failing renewal of Nature and of Poetry.

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